

“How can I protect my child from sexual abuse?”



We are glad you asked!

There are a number of precautionary measures parents and caregivers can do to help protect their children from becoming victims of sexual abuse.

The first thing a parent needs to do is tell their child about sexual abuse. Children need to know about inappropriate touches and unsafe sexual behaviors so they will know it is wrong and that they should say no!

The average age a child becomes a victim is six and they won't know about sexual abuse if we don't tell them. It is the parent's reluctance to talk about sexual abuse that contributes to the problem.

Talking about sexual abuse prevention is much easier than the heart ache of dealing with sexual abuse recovery with your child.

We applaud you for your interest in protecting children from sexual abuse and ask that you please pass this information on.

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1. **Teach your child** the proper names of their private body parts and tell them to always keep their private parts covered. (areas their bathing suit or underwear covers)
2. **Avoid focusing exclusively on** “stranger danger.” Keep in mind that most children are sexually abused by someone they know and trust.
3. **Teach your child about “body boundaries”** and the difference between “okay” and “not okay” touches. Empower them to say no when they do not want to be touched, even in non-sexual ways. (They can politely refuse hugs)
4. **Teach your child to be respectful of** other people's privacy and private parts, and to not touch anyone's' private parts even if they are asked.
5. **Teach children to take care of their** own private parts so they don't have to rely on adults or older children for help. (As in bathing, wiping after bathroom use) Remind them to shut the bathroom door and dress in private.
6. **When possible, bath and dress your** child before the babysitter comes.
7. **Teach children to refuse to play** games that involve taking off their clothes.
8. **Tell children to always tell you if** anyone touches their private parts even if they are threatened or told not to tell, even if they love that person.
9. **Tell your child that if they are** touched or made to touch someone's private parts they aren't bad and you will not be mad at them, but they need to tell you immediately.
10. **Educate children about the** difference between good secrets (like surprise parties) and bad secrets (like the ones than make them feel yucky or afraid) and they should never keep bad secrets. They should tell you about them.
11. **Tell your child to tell you if anyone** shows them their private parts, or pictures or videos of people with no clothes on.
12. **Trust your instincts. Ask questions.** Believe your child.
13. **Tell your child you love them often** and develop a loving, caring relationship so your child will feel free to talk to you about all issues.
14. **Let others know you've talked to** your child about sexual abuse. The greater area your voice is heard the safer your child will be.
15. **Go to www.sexoffenderregister.com** and look for offenders in your area.
16. **Review these precautions with** your child at least every year.

The best time to talk to your child about sexual abuse is NOW.



If you need help with sexual abuse recovery or would like to help us promote sexual abuse prevention education, please give us a call. 231-775-6804 or email office@healingprivatewounds.org

Healing Private Wounds is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization serving northern Michigan since 2006. www.healingprivatewounds.org



References

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/ace/prevalence.htm>.