

## IMPORTANT SYMPTOMS OF STRANGULATION

**VOICE CHANGES:** voice sounds raspy, deeper or hoarse. Loss of voice, or coughing

**SWALLOWING CHANGES:** difficulty swallowing, or a thick feeling inside your throat, it is painful to swallow, or to eat and drink

**BREATHING CHANGES:** difficulty breathing, you feel you are unable to catch a breath

**VISION CHANGES:** loss of vision, black and white vision, seeing stars, or blurry vision

**BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES:** restlessness, difficulty finding a word, difficulty concentrating, memory loss, agitation, hallucinating

**HEARING CHANGES:** loss of hearing, ringing, buzzing, popping, pressure or tunnel-like sensation

**OTHER SYMPTOMS:** unconsciousness, fainting, seizures or twitching, headache, dizziness, loss of bladder or bowel control, vomiting, weakness or drooping of your face

## When to see a doctor

Strangulation is very dangerous. If you have been strangled, even if you do not have signs that can be seen it is important that you go to a doctor. Take this brochure with you to help explain your symptoms.

### WHEN TO BE CONCERNED:

IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE SYMPTOMS LISTED IN THIS HANDOUT, OR IF NEW SYMPTOMS APPEAR, OR YOUR SYMPTOMS GET WORSE: GO TO THE NEAREST MEDICAL CLINIC, OR EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, OR CALL 911

If you would like to talk to someone about strangulation contact: **Today Family Violence Help Centre at 780-455-6880**, or **City of Edmonton Community Services at 780-496-4777**  
If you would like training on this issue contact: **C.I.A.F.V. at [www.ciafv.com](http://www.ciafv.com)**

# Strangulation

## Information for Victims

*What you need to know  
- it could save your life*

Are you having difficulty explaining your symptoms, or what has happened to you?

Use this brochure, it will help people understand what you are feeling and why.

©Morag McLean RN  
[morag.mcleanrn@gmail.com](mailto:morag.mcleanrn@gmail.com)  
Domestic Violence and Health Consulting,  
Edmonton, Alberta

# Strangulation Information

## VISIBLE SIGNS OF STRANGULATION:

Blood red eyes  
Bruising and swelling  
Swollen lips  
Tiny red blood spots (petechiae)  
Red marks  
Scratches

You may have no obvious signs of injury. Even if you have no sign of injury it is possible to have hidden injuries that can be life threatening. There could be serious injury to your brain, nerves, blood vessels, lungs, and throat.

\*Strangulation is one of the most dangerous types of assaults you can experience

\*Abusers often use strangulation during a sexual assault, or during other types of abuse

\*Only a small number of strangulation victims will have visible signs of injury

\*Strangulation can cause death

\*Strangulation can cause miscarriage

\*Strangulation can cause you serious injuries that last for days, weeks, or years after the assault

\* Being strangled is a sign that you are in a very dangerous relationship

## Is it strangulation or is it choking?

Choking and strangulation are different

**CHOKING:** is when something like a candy or piece of food gets stuck in your throat and blocks your windpipe. This stops air going into your lungs

**STRANGULATION:** is when something is put around your neck and pressure is applied. This stops the blood going to your brain, and the air going to your lungs.

Strangulation and choking are both dangerous