



# What is Acquaintance Rape?

Acquaintance rape is when someone a teen knows — a partner, friend, classmate, or person they just met — uses coercion to force sexual contact (oral, vaginal, penile, anal). Coercion may include drugs or alcohol, violence, threats, bribes or peer pressure. When it happens with a partner, this is commonly known as **date rape**.

## What increases risk of acquaintance rape?

First, remember that the blame for rape always lies with the rapist. However, there are some factors that can increase a teen's risk:

1. Frequently drinking or using substances to the point of being significantly impaired
2. Prior history of rape or sexual victimization
3. Adhering to harmful, outdated beliefs, like “owing sex” to another person

## How can parents help teens stay safe?

Teach your child they never “owe” anyone sexual contact. This applies to any partner, regardless of how long they've been dating, or if they've received gifts. Talking honestly can be uncomfortable, but the more open you are, the more likely your teen will be to come to you.

Give teens the information and support they need to make smart choices and avoid risky situations. This includes giving them reliable information and trusted resources about:

- \* Sexual intercourse and other sexual activity
- \* Ways to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy
- \* Alcohol and drugs, including “date rape” drugs such as Rohypnol (“ruffies” or “roofies”) and GHB

- \* Qualities of healthy relationships
- \* Red flags to look for in dangerous relationships

## How should parents react if their teen is a victim of acquaintance rape?

### 1. Stay calm.

Your teen may have broken the rules or acted inappropriately, but no one deserves to be raped.

### 2. Discuss urgent medical needs.

If the encounter just happened, encourage your teen to get medical attention, even if they don't look hurt or don't want to. Make sure they do not change clothes, shower or brush their teeth so the necessary evidence can be collected.

### 3. Contact law enforcement to report the rape, even if it occurred in the past.

Encourage your teen to share as much information as possible.

### 4. Seek counseling for your teen and yourself.

A counselor who specializes in sexual abuse can help you and your teen cope with what happened.

Learn more at [nctsn.org](http://nctsn.org)



Our Kids is a Nashville-based clinic that provides expert medical evaluations and crisis counseling in response to concerns of child sexual abuse. For more, visit [OurKidsCenter.com](http://OurKidsCenter.com)