FROM THE OFFICE OF **DR.**

Intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is abuse by one person over another to maintain power and control in a relationship. It occurs in many forms, which can include physical harm, sexual force, verbal abuse, emotional maltreatment, and financial control. IPV is common and affects all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. It is estimated that one in four US women will be abused by a partner during her lifetime. It is important to remember than IPV is a crime and that help is available.

Warning signs of IPV

Does your partner:

- ❑ Embarrass, belittle, or make you feel unworthy?
- ❑ Isolate you from friends and family?
- ❑ Tell you that you are crazy or stupid?
- ❑ Physically harm you by slapping, pushing, grabbing, punching, choking, or kicking you?
- ❑ Use intimidation to control you?
- ❑ Make you feel trapped?
- ❑ Control your finances or keep track of your whereabouts?
- ❑ Threaten you verbally or with a weapon?
- ❑ Get angry or lose control when drunk or high?
- ❑ Stalk you or harass you at work?

Do you:

- ❑ Believe that you can help your partner change his/her abusive behavior?
- ❑ Find yourself trying not to make him/her angry?
- ❑ Stay with him/her because you are afraid he/she will hurt you?
- ❑ Believe that the abuse would stop if you changed yourself?
- ❑ Stay because of your children or for financial reasons?
- ❑ Feel that you cannot make it or survive on your own?

By answering yes to any of the above questions, you have identified an abusive relationship. It is important for you to seek help and advice by talking to your physician or a social worker.

CLEVELAND CLINIC JOURNAL OF MEDICINE

This information is provided by your physician and the *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine*. It is not designed to replace a physician's medical assessment and judgment.
This page may be reproduced noncommercially to share with patients. Any other reproduction is subject to *Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine* approval. Bulk color reprints available by calling **216-444-2661.**

For patient information on hundreds of health topics, see the Patient Education and Health Information web site, www.clevelandclinic.org/health

If you decide to leave, plan to:

❑ Devise a plan of escape to leave safely before a dangerous situation comes up.

❑ Keep your purse and car keys handy in case you have to leave quickly.

❑ Tell a friend to call the police if he or she has not heard from you in a while.

❑ Teach your children to call 911.

❑ Have a code word so that friends or family can call for help.

❑ Carry with you telephone numbers for the police and local victim hotline and shelters.

❑ Know if you will go to the home of a friend or family member or shelter.

❑ Leave a suitcase packed with clothes, cash, and toiletries with someone you trust.

❑ Avoid using credit or debit cards, which can be tracked.

❑ Keep copies of important documents (ID, birth certificates, social security cards, driver's license, passports, account statements, pay stubs, and other legal documents) in a safe place.

❑ Create you own bank account.

❑ Call the 24-hour National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) if you do not have any resources.

Where can I get more information?

- The Cleveland Clinic Health Information Center
  www.clevelandclinic.org/health/
- National Institutes of Health
  www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/domesticviolence.html
- National Domestic Violence Hotline, 800-799-SAFE (7233),
  provides 24-hour crisis intervention and referrals to community resources.