



# HEALTH BULLETIN

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## Do you know that 1 in 10 teens reports being physically abused by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the last year?



Many others are sexually or emotionally abused by their dating partners. Shocking! Yet many teens do not report abuse because they are afraid to tell friends and family.

**February is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness & Prevention Month.** Parents and care givers can do much to prevent teen dating violence and abuse. One of the most important things you can do is keep the lines of communication open with your kids. Take some time this month to learn how you can make a difference:

- ✓ Be a role model - treat your kids and others with respect.
- ✓ Start talking to your kids about healthy relationships early - before they start dating.
- ✓ Get involved with efforts to prevent dating violence at your teen's school.
- ✓ Call the National Dating Abuse Helpline at 1-866-331-9474 or text "loveis" to 77054, if you are worried about your teen.

To find out more about how to prevent dating violence, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/features/datingviolence/>

## ♥ American Heart Month ♥

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services joins the American Heart Association in promoting healthy lifestyles and healthy hearts during February, American Heart Month. Here's what you should know:

**Heart disease** is the leading cause of death in the United States. Stroke is the fourth leading cause of death in the U.S. More than one in three adults live with one or more types of cardiovascular disease, and someone has a heart attack every 34 seconds in the U.S. What's more: heart disease and stroke often result in serious illness and disability, decreased quality of life, and hundreds of billions of dollars in economic loss every year.

**Risk factors** for heart disease include physical inactivity, poor diet, tobacco and alcohol use, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, overweight/obesity and diabetes. Over time, risk factors cause changes in the heart and blood vessels that can lead to heart attacks, heart failure and strokes.

**Fortunately, cardiovascular disease is preventable.** You can make healthy changes to lower your risk of developing heart disease. Controlling and preventing risk factors is also important for people who already have heart disease. To lower your risk:

- ♥ **Watch your weight.**
- ♥ **Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.**
- ♥ **Control your cholesterol and blood pressure.**
- ♥ **If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation.**
- ♥ **Get active and eat healthfully**

To find out more about how you can prevent heart disease and stroke, visit the [American Heart Association](http://www.heart.org) website: [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org). For a listing of local activities supporting heart health, enter "Long Island" in the search field.