

## Sexual choking

Sexual choking is where someone applies pressure to your neck that partially or completely restricts airflow or blood flow to your brain during sex.

### Why do people do it?

People generally engage in sexual choking to increase endorphins (the body's feel-good chemicals) and to intensify orgasm.

### Is sexual choking risky?

Sexual choking is a high-risk sexual activity. There is no risk-free way to engage in sexual choking. Every time you choke someone, or you let someone choke you, you risk serious injury, brain injury and death.

### What about consent?

Informed consent is a person's decision, given voluntarily, to agree to an activity after they have been provided with accurate and relevant information about the activity.

NSW laws relating to sexual consent have changed recently to require affirmative consent. Affirmative consent means everyone participating in a sexual activity enthusiastically agrees to take part in that specific sexual activity.

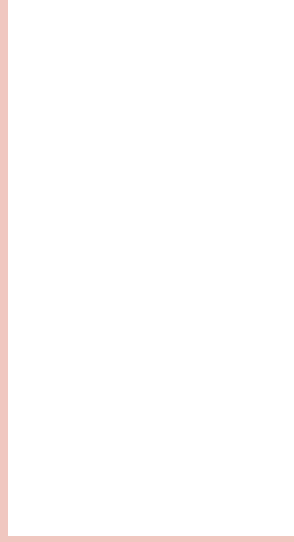
### What is harm reduction?

While there is no completely safe way to choke or be choked, some people who engage in sexual choking use harm reduction strategies to help reduce the risk.

Harm reduction strategies can also include making a plan of action together for what to do if something goes wrong. **Ask yourself:** *Do you know what to do if your partner stops breathing?*

### Who can I talk to about sexual choking?

If you would like to discuss sexual choking all women's health centres across NSW have staff who have been trained to support you to navigate risk, set boundaries, or help you engage harm reduction strategies relating to sexual choking.



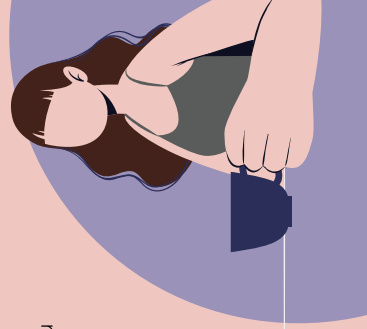
or

### Find your closest women's health centre here:

<https://whnsw.asn.au/womens-healthcentres-nsw/>

### Useful information can be found here:

[www.itleftnomarks.com.au](http://www.itleftnomarks.com.au)

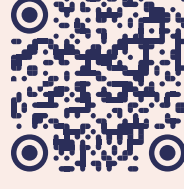


Was pressure applied to your neck or were you held in a way that made it hard to breathe... even during sex?



# It left no marks

[itleftnomarks.com.au](http://itleftnomarks.com.au)



# Strangulation

## Strangulation is a form of violence

People might call strangulation something else, like being choked, or being pinned against something, or describe it as being held in a way that made it difficult to breathe. Strangulation can be experienced as a form of sexual violence, or as part of a pattern of domestic and family violence. If the person doing the strangling is your intimate partner, strangulation can be a sign that the violence in your relationship is getting worse and that you are at greater risk.

## Health and safety risks

There are health risks to being strangled: even a one-time strangulation can create serious injuries, including to your brain. We recommend you see a doctor as soon as it is safe to do so, and being as truthful as possible about what has occurred. You can also attend an emergency department at any NSW hospital following strangulation: all hospitals have clinical guidelines that tell them how to help you. Hospitals can also connect you to social workers, Women's Health Centres, as well as domestic and family violence services.

## Strangulation is a crime

Strangulation is a crime in NSW. If you have been strangled, you have the option to contact NSW Police to report the crime. You can also ask police to take out a protection order (an Apprehended Violence Order) to prevent the perpetrator from contacting you. You can ask to speak to the Sexual Violence Portfolio Holder (SVPH) or the Domestic Violence Liaison Officer (DVLO) at any major police station.

You can also contact a free legal service for advice about your options, like Women's Legal Service NSW or Legal Aid NSW. There may also be victim's compensation options you can pursue.

## Managing at home

If you decide not to seek help after strangulation, there are some things you can do at home to help you manage the symptoms. Try to avoid bright lights and situations with lots of stimulus, reduce stress by taking some time off work, limit your screen time, and rest whenever you are tired.

There are a few red flags you should look out for at home. **If you start to struggle to breathe, call an ambulance.** Your throat can continue to swell for a couple of days after the event. After being strangled, it's common to have headaches and difficulty thinking straight, but if these symptoms get worse or keep going for more than ten days, seek medical attention.

## Seek medical attention if you experience any of the following, or have visible signs (see image below):

**BREATHING** - Difficulty breathing, unable to breathe.

**SWALLOWING** - Trouble or pain when swallowing.

**VOICE** - Changes in voice, hoarse voice, inability to speak.

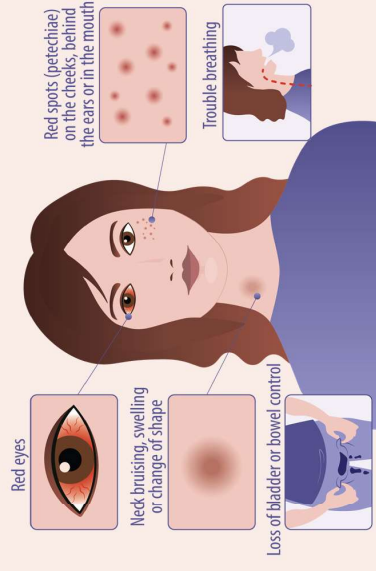
**HEAD** - Headaches, dizziness, feeling foggy, memory problems.

**VISION** - Eye problems, double or blurry vision, loss of vision.

**HEARING** - Ear problems, ringing or buzzing in your ears.

**PHYSICAL** - Clumsiness, loss of balance or strength, seizures or fits.

## VISIBLE SIGNS OF STRANGULATION



## IT IS IMPORTANT TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP IF REQUIRED

If you are in immediate danger call '000' and ask for the police or an ambulance.

For crisis support after strangulation and sexual violence call:  
**1800 FULL STOP (1800 385 578)**

For help with strangulation as domestic and family violence call:  
**NSW Domestic Violence Line 1800 65 64 63**

For ongoing support after strangulation or sexual choking contact your closest women's health centre:  
<https://whnsw.asn.au/womens-health-centres-nsw/>

For legal advice after strangulation visit:  
Women's Legal Service NSW  
<https://www.wlsw.org.au/contact-us/>

For legal support after strangulation or sexual choking visit: Legal Aid NSW  
<https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/contact-us>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman can access legal support after strangulation at:  
Wirringa Baiya  
<https://www.wirringabaiya.org.au/>

