

# The TRUTH About Rape

**Myth:** *Rape doesn't happen very often.*

**TRUTH:** 1 out of every 6 adult women has been a victim of rape.

**Myth:** *Men can't be raped.*

**TRUTH:** Approximately 92,700 men are raped each year in the U.S.

**Myth:** *Rape is only committed by strangers.*

**TRUTH:** Two-thirds of rape victims report a prior relationship with the offender.

In 2000, about 8 in 10 rape or sexual assault victims stated the offender was a boyfriend or girlfriend, other relative, a friend or an acquaintance.

**Myth:** *Women lead men on. Sometimes they are just asking to be raped.*

**TRUTH:** No one ever asks to be raped.

Forcing someone to engage in sexual activity against their will is sexual assault—regardless of the way that person dresses or acts.

**Myth:** *Rape is "no big deal."*

**TRUTH:** About one in three women who are injured during a rape or physical assault require medical care.

Rape victims can also experience negative mental health outcomes and are more likely to engage in harmful behaviors to cope with the trauma, such as drinking, smoking or using drugs.



For more information, please contact:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Injury Prevention and Control  
770-488-1506  
[www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury)



**Myth:** *A woman can't be raped against her will. Anyone can stop rape if they really want to stop it.*

**TRUTH:** **Anytime someone forces sexual activity, it is rape.**  
Rape victims can face threats of force, be under the influence of drugs/alcohol, or even be asleep. Regardless of the situation, sex against someone's will is rape.

**Myth:** *A person who has really been sexually assaulted will be hysterical.*

**TRUTH:** **There is no "right way" to react to sexual assault.**  
Sexual assault victims can be calm, hysterical, withdrawn, angry, in denial, or in shock.

**Myth:** *I don't know anyone who's ever been raped.*

**TRUTH:** **Rape victims are doctors, lawyers, nurses, military personnel, cooks, accountants, or anyone.**  
Less than one-third of rape and sexual assaults are reported to the police.

#### References:

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