

# Strangulation Aftercare Instructions

## Ontario Network of SA/DVTC

You were seen today for care after an assault that included being “choked” or strangled. These instructions will help you know when it is important to go to the emergency department.

We are providing you with instructions for when you return home.

### **What is strangulation?**

Strangulation can cause injury to the neck and brain. When someone is strangled, it can affect blood flow to the brain. This can impact the health of the brain and memory, as well as other physical and mental health concerns.

### **Home Instructions:**

Your symptoms are mild at this time, so you are being discharged home. It is recommended someone you trust stay with you for the next 24–72 hours after this experience of strangulation.

You may notice some bruising or discomfort. Apply ice for 15-20 minutes every two to three hours during the first two days. This can help ease soreness and pain.

**It is possible your symptoms may become worse in the next couple of hours or within a few days. Please call 911 OR go immediately to the nearest emergency department if you or your support person notice any of the following:**

- Breathing gets worse (difficulty breathing while lying down, shortness of breath when staying still, new persistent cough, or coughing up blood)
- Loss of consciousness or “passing out”
- Worsening changes in your voice or inability to speak
- Worsening difficulty with swallowing or drooling
- Persistent or worsening swelling of your throat, neck, or tongue
- Increasing neck pain that does not improve with over-the-counter pain medication
- Weakness, numbness, or tingling on either side of the body
- Any change in ability to walk
- New or worsening headaches
- New dizziness or lightheadedness
- Loss of vision or persistent blurred vision
- Pinpoint red or purple dots (petechia) on your face, in your mouth or in your eye
- Seizures

- Sudden changes in level of awareness such as confusion, feeling paranoid, new or worsening thoughts of harming yourself or harming others, or excessive tiredness/drowsiness
- Drooping eyelid or eyelids
- Not able to control your bladder or bowel

**If you are pregnant**, report the strangulation and any of the following symptoms to your health care provider (ex: midwife, physician, nurse practitioner) immediately:

- Decreased fetal movement
- Vaginal spotting or bleeding
- Abdominal pain
- Contractions/cramping

If you have any questions about the care you received at the Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centre, please contact us.

You can call us at: \_\_\_\_\_  
(SA/DVTC phone number)

Our address is: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Hospital name, address)