

DARE TO SPEAK



DEAR READER

Sexuality is a beautiful and natural part of every human being.

In Finland everyone has the right to get information about sexuality and sexual health.

In this guidebook you can read about your sexual rights in Finland. You will also find information on how to take care of your sexual health.

At the end of this booklet you will find a list of services that you can contact.

Enjoy this guidebook, we hope you will find the information in it useful!

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SEXUAL HEALTH AND SEXUAL RIGHTS

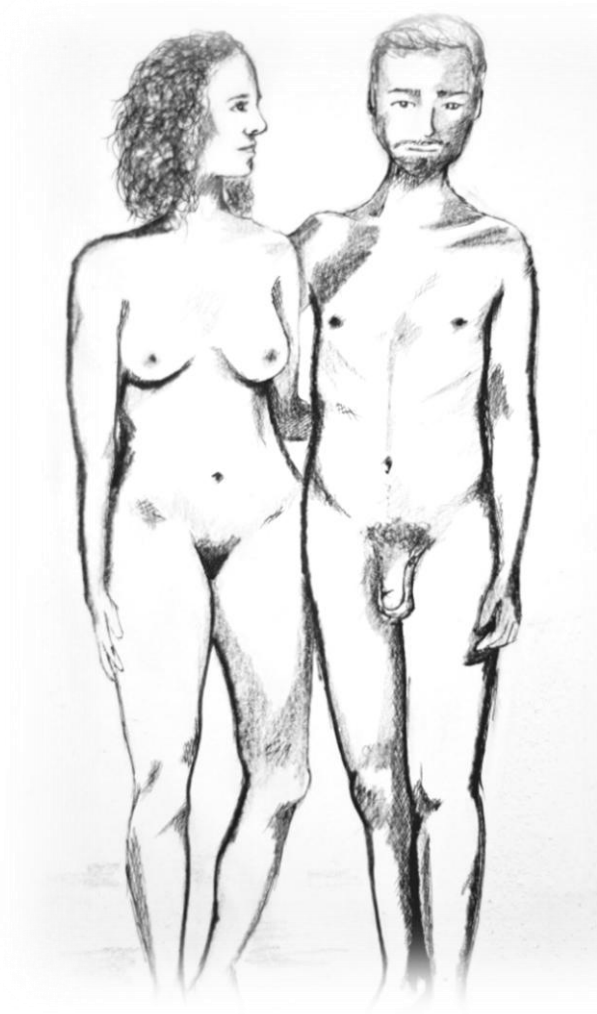
General health includes good sexual health. It means being able to take care of yourself and enjoying your own body.

Sexuality is a positive matter. Sexual rights include respecting one's own and the others' sexuality. Violence or forcing always discriminates sexual rights. Positive and safe sexual experiences are a part of the sexual health.

Sexual rights are part of the human rights.

According to the law, everyone is entitled to sexual rights. Everyone has the right for sexual freedom, sexual well-being and equality.

Everyone has the right to determine his/her sexuality. Each individual has the same value.



In Finland man and woman are equal.

You have the right to be untouched, feel safe and not to be sexually harassed or assaulted.

The same rights go for married individuals.

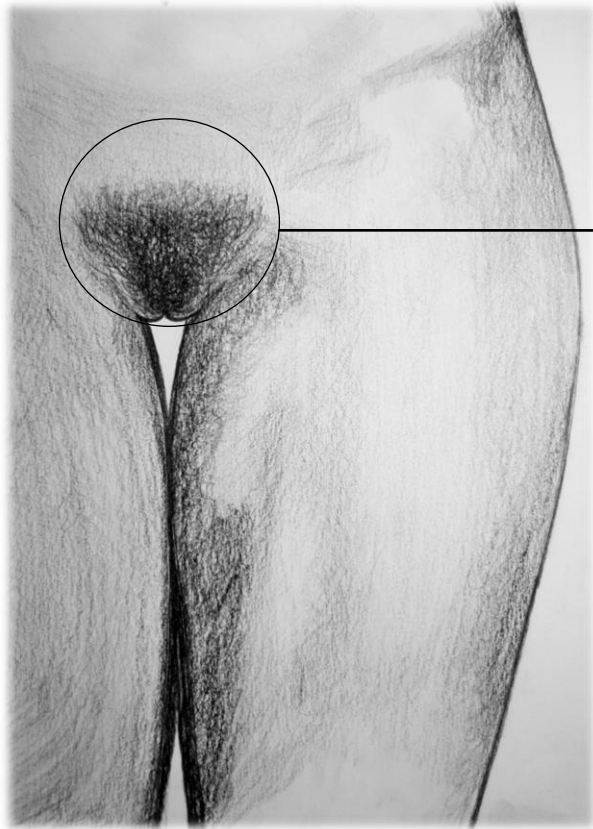
You can decide whether you want to live by yourself, with a partner, unmarried or married or get divorced.

Everyone has the freedom to fulfill his/her sexuality, as long as it doesn't offend any other person's sexual rights.

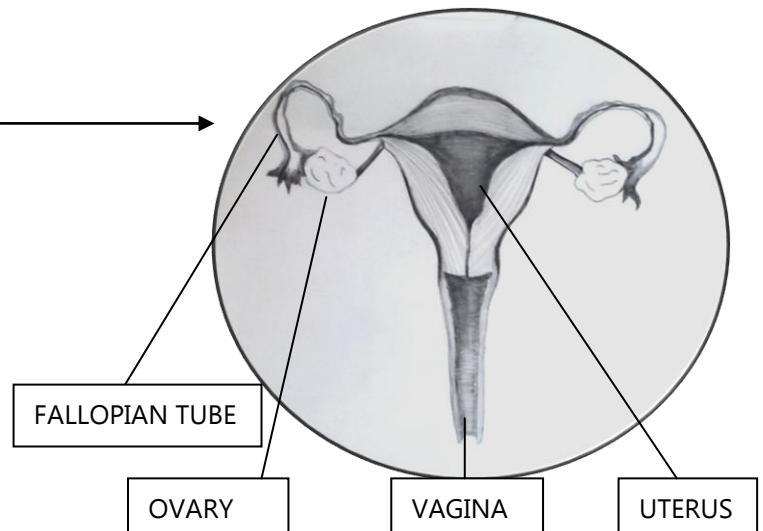
An adult should act responsible by taking care of his/her own and the other's sexual health.

Everyone is entitled to services concerning sexual health.

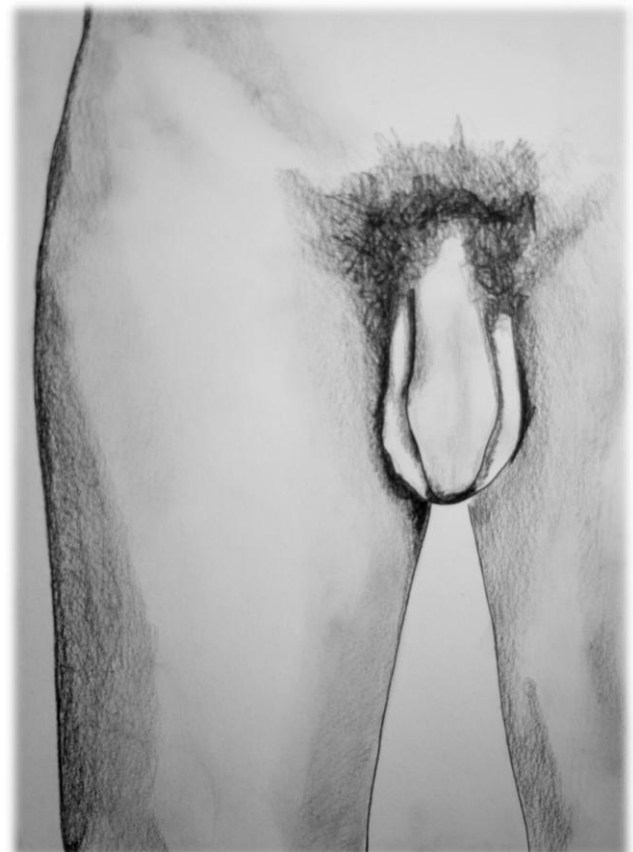
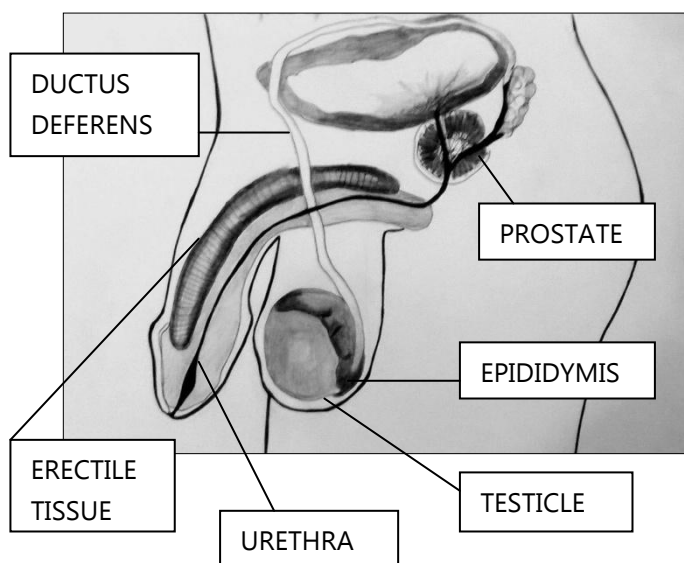
FEMALE AND MALE SEXUAL ANATOMY



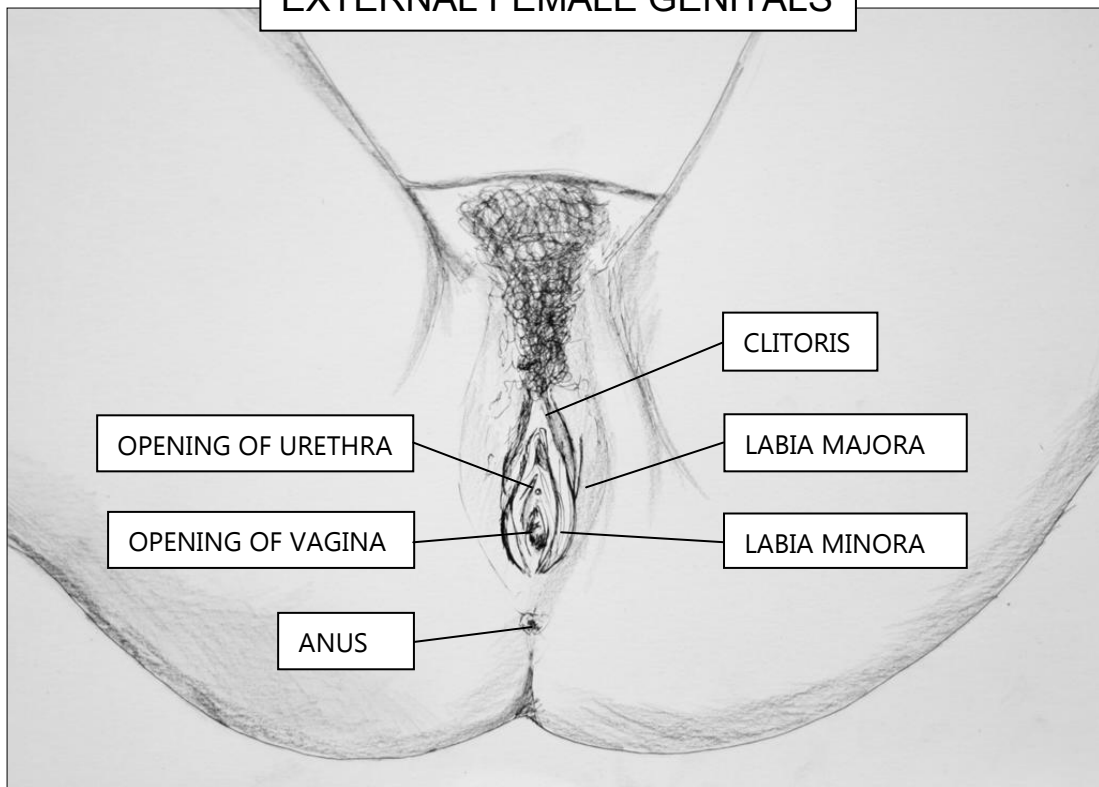
FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM



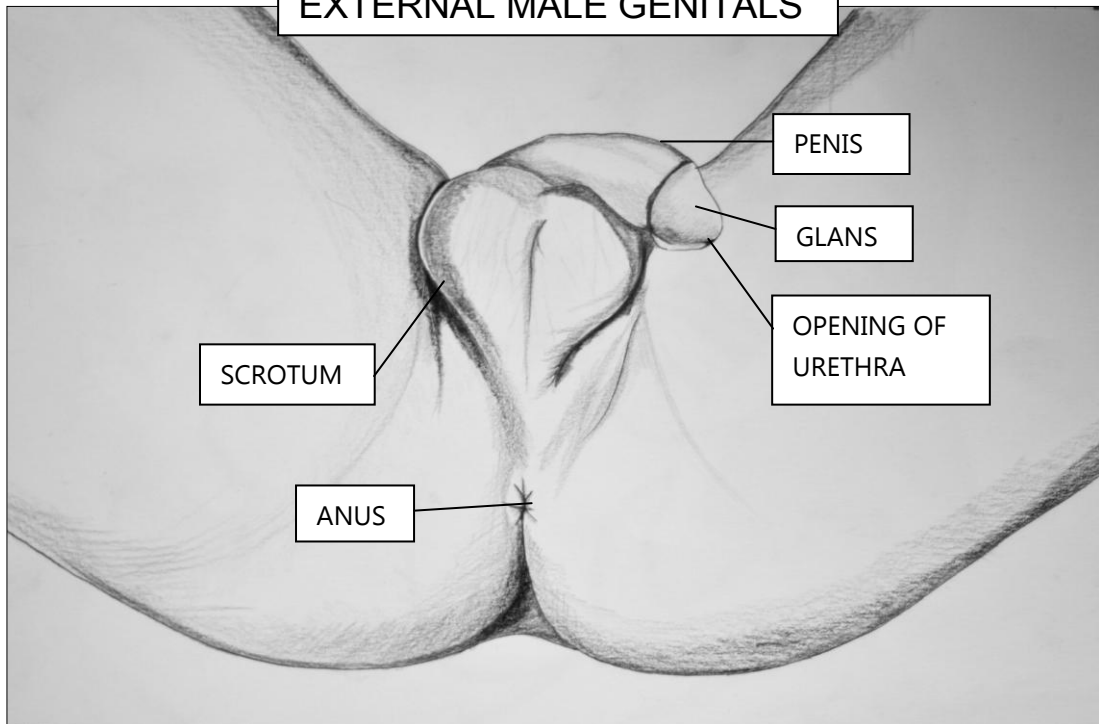
MALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM



EXTERNAL FEMALE GENITALS



EXTERNAL MALE GENITALS



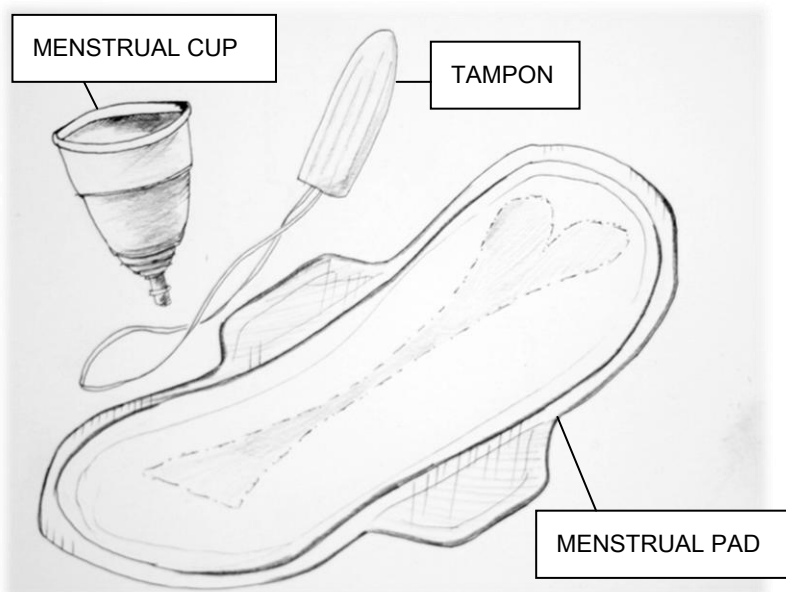
MENSTRUATION

The menstruation or period prepares a girl's body for a possible pregnancy. Girls get their first period between the ages 10 and 16. The average menstrual cycle is 28 days long.

The cycle is counted from the first day of bleeding to the start of the next period.

The monthly bleeding starts if the egg cell isn't fertilized by a sperm cell. The lining of the uterus is shed through the opening of the vagina. The bleeding can be light or heavy and last from 2 to 7 days.

Some women may bleed slightly before and after the regular period.



There are different products to use during the menstruation, for example pads, tampons or menstrual cups.

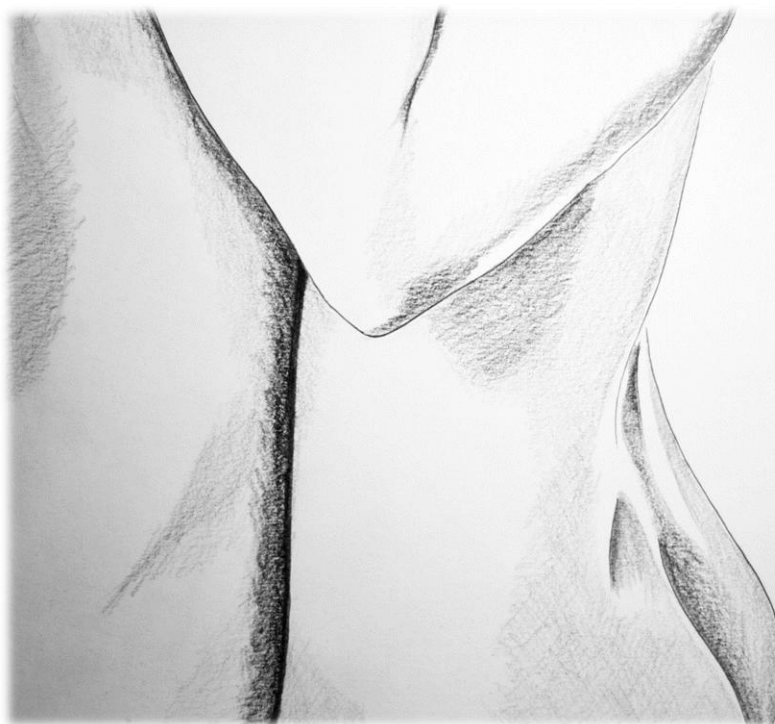
It's very important to take care of good personal hygiene during the menstruation by washing the vagina every 4 to 8 hours when changing the menstrual product.

Almost every woman experiences some periodic pain. Usually the pain is felt as abdominal pain but some feel it as back pain and pain in the feet. Some may also feel nausea, dizziness or headache. Periodic pain is a normal symptom, which can be managed by using medications. If the bleeding or pain is unmanageable you should see your doctor.

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

Sex is one way of being intimate and enjoying each other.

It's a way to please oneself and the other. There are different ways to have sex. You can have sex by yourself (masturbation) or together with someone. Having mutual sex always requires permission of both. Between partners sex can be an act of love. Sex shouldn't hurt or feel bad. In a family sex is a private matter between the parents.



It's good to keep in mind that non-safe sex can cause a sexually transmitted disease.

Vaginal sex is an act where a man inserts his penis into the woman's vagina. If he ejaculates while being inside the vagina sex may lead to a pregnancy. Ejaculation means the sperm cells being burst out from the male opening of the urethra among the sperm.



Even if sexual intercourse is interrupted before ejaculation the woman might end up being pregnant.
Interrupted sex is no contraception.

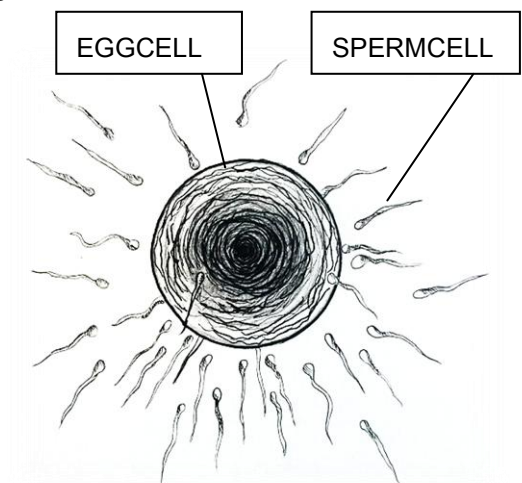
FERTILIZATION

Pregnancy starts when a sperm cell of the man fertilizes the egg cell of the woman. When the man ejaculates the sperm cells swim through the womb into the fallopian tube of the woman. If an egg cell is located in the fallopian tube it can be fertilized by a sperm cell. The fertilized egg continues its way into the womb, where it attaches to the wall of the womb. The egg begins to develop into a fetus.

The egg cell remains able to being fertilized only for 24 hours after detaching from the ovary, – this is called ovulation. Ovulation happens approximately 2 weeks after the start of the last menstruation.

Sperm cells can live inside the female reproductive system from 1

to 4 days. The sperm cell of the man determines the gender of the baby.



PREGNANCY

A full-time pregnancy lasts for 40 weeks. The first day of the



last menstruation starts the counting of the weeks. Usually a pregnancy is noticed by a missed menstruation. Pregnancy tests can be bought in pharmacies. In Finland all pregnant women are regularly visiting the maternity clinic, where the health of mother and baby is being kept track of. After

the birth the child is being checked regularly in a child health center. Track is being kept on the growth and development of the baby. Breastfeeding and the well-being of the whole family are also among the discussed topics.

BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding is a beautiful moment shared by mother and child. It has a positive effect on both. For the first 6 months breast milk is the only nutrition a baby needs. Breast milk provides the baby with nutrients and helps building up the immune system and intestines.



The only nutrient, which breast milk doesn't provide enough is vitamin D. You can purchase vitamin D products for daily use in pharmacies.

Sometimes the mother's or baby's illness affects the breastfeeding making it impossible. On rare occasions the breast milk isn't enough to satisfy the baby's need. Breast milk substitutes can be bought in grocery stores.

After giving birth in a hospital mother and baby get help to having a good start into breastfeeding. After returning home these matters can be discussed in the maternity or child health clinic.

POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

Some mothers start to develop postpartum depression after they have given birth. The condition can start to appear up to 3 months after birth. A mother feeling constantly down or being weepy and exhausted, not able to manage every-day activities may suffer from postpartum depression. Speaking up in the health clinic is crucial for getting help. Getting support from partner and friends is also essential for coping in the new life situation.

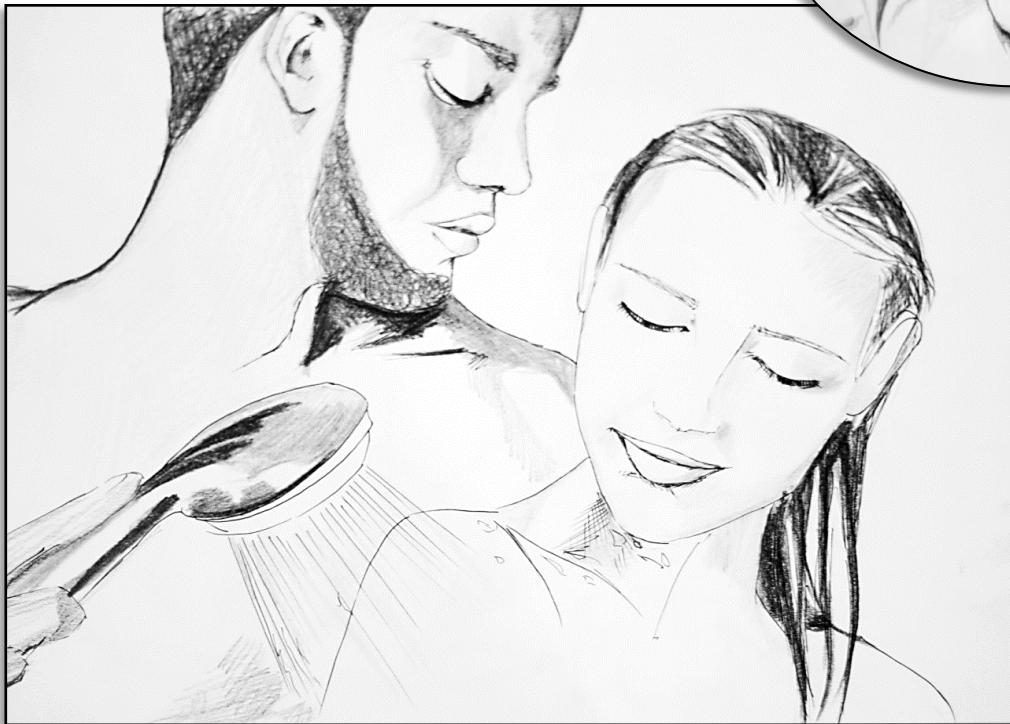


FAMILY PLANNING

In Finland parents and their children form a core family. A pair without children or a single-parent with his/her children is also considered a family.

Two adults can form an intimate relationship.

Also two people of the same gender can be in a relationship. In Finland you can be married only to one person at a time.





Everyone is free to plan their own family. Each pair can decide for themselves the amount and timing of their offspring or if they want children at all.



BIRTH CONTROL AND CONTRACEPTION

Using contraception is everyone's right. There are many different methods available to prevent a pregnancy.

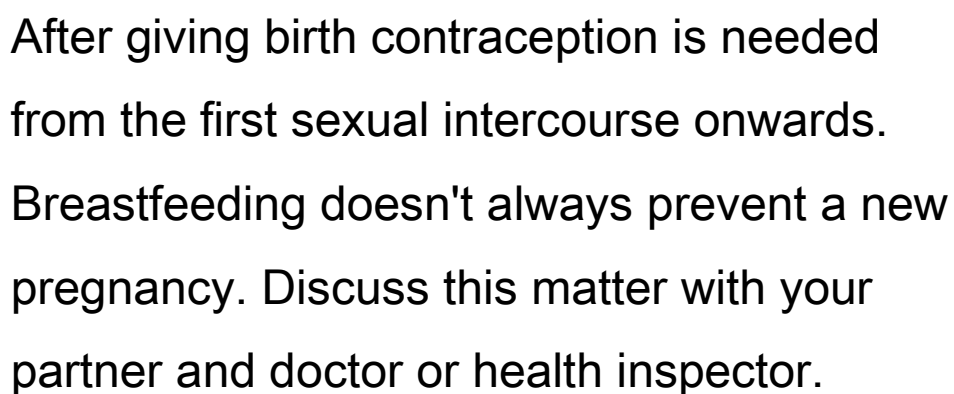
Receiving information about contraception is a part of the sexual rights. In Finland also the youth is entitled to have access to birth control, no permission of the parents is needed.

The condom is a good contraception in many ways, being the only contraception which also gives protection against sexually transmitted diseases. Condoms are available in grocery stores and pharmacies, no prescription needed.

Long-term contraception can be discussed with the doctor or health inspector. The most suitable contraception is planned individually for each one. On the market are for example the contraceptive pill, contraceptive bandage and contraceptive ring. While using contraception it is important to attend regular health checks.

If contraception has failed or was not used at all it is possible to use emergency contraception, – pills that prevent pregnancy after having sex. The pill has to be taken at the latest 72 hours after the un-protected sexual intercourse. Emergency contraception shouldn't be used regularly or as the only contraception. These products can be bought in pharmacies without a prescription.

Abortion is an interrupted pregnancy and no contraception.

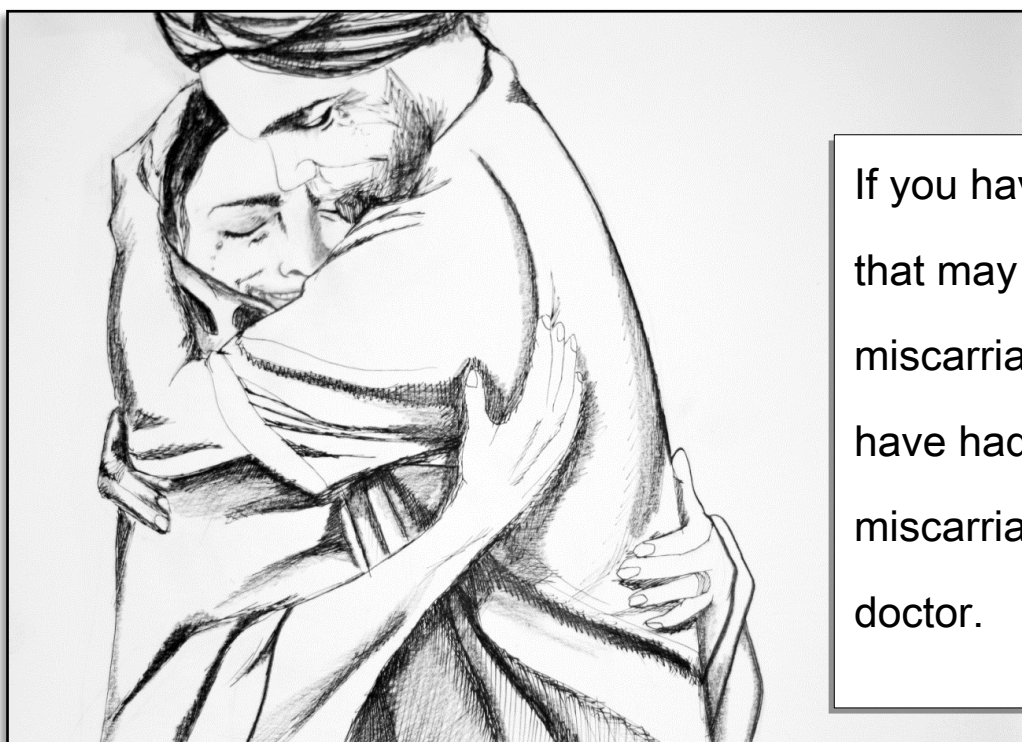


After giving birth contraception is needed from the first sexual intercourse onwards. Breastfeeding doesn't always prevent a new pregnancy. Discuss this matter with your partner and doctor or health inspector.

MISCARRIAGE

Some pregnancies end in a miscarriage, which means that the fetus dies in the womb before the 22. pregnancy week. Usually this happens early in the pregnancy and may even remain unnoticed.

Lower stomach pain and bleeding can be symptoms of a miscarriage. In most of the cases it remains unknown what has caused the ending of the pregnancy. A premature birth means that the fetus is born between the pregnancy weeks 22 and 37. The loss of the fetus in the womb after pregnancy week 22 is considered a stillbirth.



If you have symptoms that may indicate a miscarriage or if you have had several miscarriages see your doctor.

INFERTILITY

Family planning doesn't guarantee that a pregnancy starts like planned.

A pair is considered to suffer from infertility, if a pregnancy doesn't occur after having regular unprotected sex for one year. The pair should see a gynecologist or talk about their inability to get pregnant at a health station or an infertility clinic. Both man and woman are being tested. After the cause is known fertility treatments can be started. With the help of different fertility treatments the possibility of getting pregnant improves.

Your doctor or gynecologist can send you to infertility tests.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR SEXUAL HEALTH

Regular visits to a health care provider are important. In Finland discussing sexual health matters with your doctor or nurse is as normal as discussing any other health issue. There are doctors called gynecologists, who are specialized on treating women. Doctors specialized on men's health are urologists. It is usual that the sex organs are examined and different samples are taken on the regular visits.

Women between the age of 30 and 60 get invitations to a screening test every 5 years. These tests screen cervical cancer. Women between 50 and 60 years are examined every 2 years on breast cancer.

It is important to know your body. Men should examine their testicles and women their breasts on a monthly basis. Check for lumps or other changes.



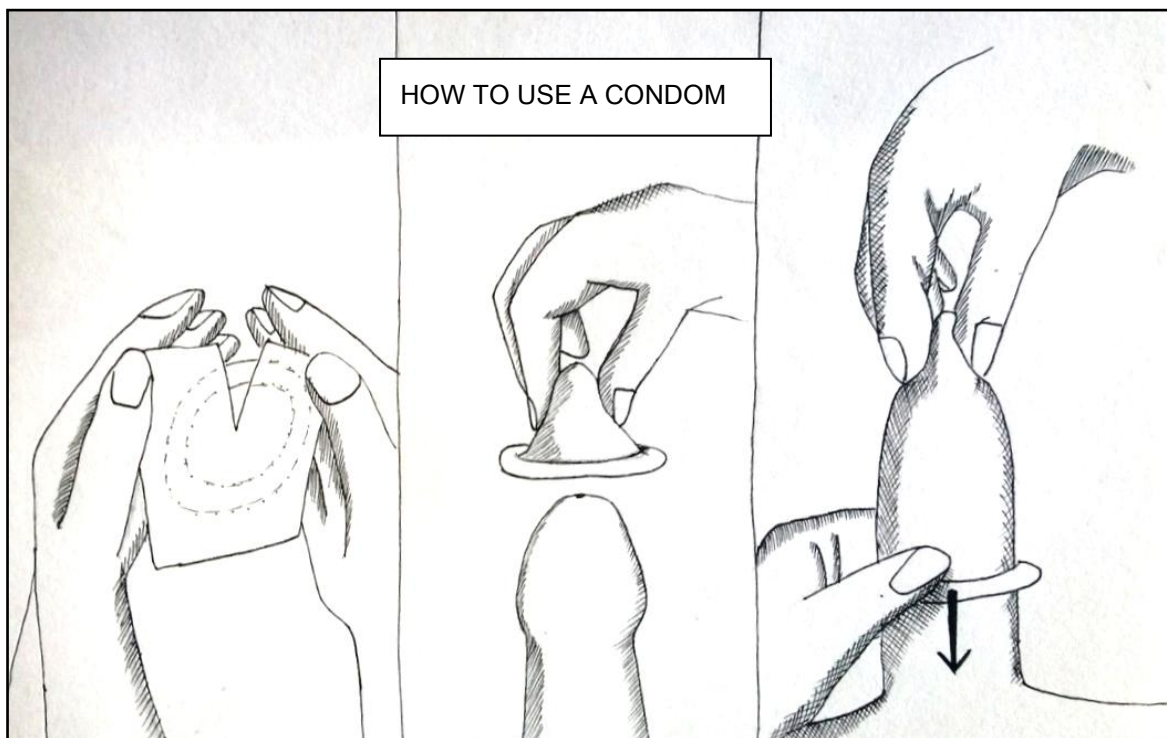
If you notice lumps or other changes on your testicles or breasts you should contact your doctor.

PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

A sexually transmitted disease (STD) is an infection that can be transmitted through sexual contact. Sexual contact can be vaginal, anal or oral intercourse or genital touching. The transmission happens through broken skin or the mucous membrane on the vaginal, penis, anal or mouth area.

Common STDs are chlamydia, condyloma, genital herpes, syphilis, gonorrhea, HIV infection and hepatitis B and C.

Using a condom throughout the sexual intercourse (also during oral or anal sex) is the best way to prevent STDs.

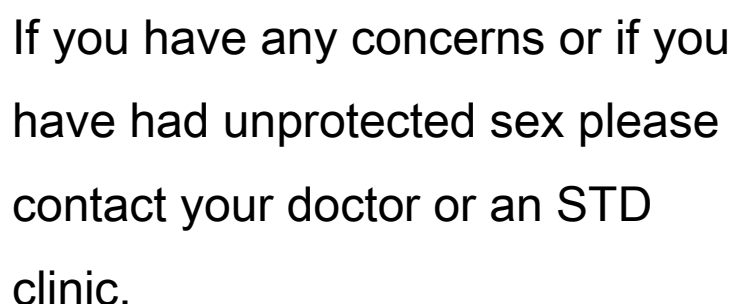


Each STD can be dangerous even without symptoms or when only minor symptoms occur. STDs always need to be treated.

Different samples are taken to find out if you have been infected. Blood and urine tests are taken, also samples on the infected area if needed. Often you are also being tested when planning birth contraception.

If you have been infected it is important to tell about it to the person you have had and are having sex with. If the partner or partners aren't being treated at the same time the transmission will spread.

Unusual discharge or blood, lower stomach pain, blisters, rash, itching or pain on the sex organs can be a sign of an STD.



If you have any concerns or if you have had unprotected sex please contact your doctor or an STD clinic.

VAGINAL INFECTIONS AND URINARY TRACT INFECTION

VAGINAL YEAST INFECTION

Yeast is a very common infection that is caused by a yeast fungus. Yeast infection can cause vaginal pain and itching among white and clumpy discharge that has no odor. Sores on the labias may also occur. However, fever, lower abdominal pain or problems urinating are signs of something else than a yeast infection.

Vaginal yeast infection can be treated with different products, which you can purchase at the pharmacy. (No prescription needed.)

It is good to see a doctor if you have symptoms for the first time or the symptoms don't pass in spite of the treatment. You should also see a doctor if you suspect a yeast infection while being pregnant.

BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS

Bacterial vaginosis is the most common cause of unusual vaginal discharge which develops when the normal environment of the vagina changes. The main symptom is vaginal discharge with a fishy smell.

Bacterial vaginosis is not an STD but the discharge may be stronger after having sex. You can treat bacterial vaginosis with different products available in the pharmacy. If the symptoms don't pass or you suspect something else you should see your doctor.

URINARY TRACT INFECTION

A urinary tract infection (UTI) is common among children and women. It can also occur on men. If you have a burning feeling while urinating and have a frequent urge to urinate you should see your doctor, who prescribes you antibiotics.

When not cured UTI may lead to a kidney infection, which always needs hospital care. Symptoms of a kidney infection are high fever, back and side pain.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In Finland violence is always a crime, which has to be reported to the police.



Domestic violence can target a child, the partner or both.

Violence can be physical like kicking, hitting and pushing or mental, like threatening, bullying or calling names.

Sexual violence is for example forcing someone to a sexual act. Raping and other sexual violence is also a crime.

Forcing to have sex is also a crime when it happens in a marriage.

Honour based violence is also a form of domestic violence. It targets a person, who in the opinion of others breaks the honour rules of the family. Honour based violence is forcing someone to live based on someone else's strict rules. It can be physical or mental and contain accusing, setting limits, threatening or even killing. In Finland, honour based violence is also a crime.



If you have suffered from domestic violence or are in danger of experiencing domestic violence you have the right to get help.

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Female genital mutilation or female circumcision is forbidden in Finland. It violates the human rights and the equality and inviolability of a girl. In Finland female genital mutilation is considered as child abuse and a matter of child protection. It is forbidden to circumcise a girl in Finland or to send her abroad to be circumcised.

Female genital mutilation means partial or total removal of parts of the labia and clitoris.



CLITORIS REMOVED



CLITORIS AND PARTS
OF THE LABIA MINORA
REMOVED AND
VAGINAL OPENING
STITCHED PARTLY



CLITORIS AND LABIA
MINORA REMOVED
AND VAGINAL
OPENING STITCHED

Circumcision discriminates the well-being of a girl and is a huge health risk. It can cause bleeding and infections which can lead to death.

Strong pain and discomfort can follow from the circumcision. Urinating, sexual intercourse and giving birth may be painful and difficult. Circumcision can also cause mental trauma.

In Finland girls are being protected against female genital mutilation by the public authority.

If you have been circumcised and it causes problems for you discuss this with your doctor. Also if you are circumcised and pregnant or planning a pregnancy it is good to inform your health care provider about it.

CHILD PROTECTION

In Finland children have their own rights and an authority named child protection takes care of family and children's matters. Each child has the right to have a safe childhood and be protected and loved.

Parents are in charge of taking care of their children, raising them and protecting them. Child protection can give the parents a helping hand in this important task.



Parents can ask for help themselves. If someone outside the family gets worried about a child's well-being he can also contact the child protection. A child protection announcement has to be made if domestic violence occurs or the child's needs are not met.

Child abuse can be physical, for example hitting, shaking, pulling hair, whipping or pushing. Mental abuse can be calling names, not appreciating or downplaying the child. Seeing violence also harms the child. Neglecting the child's needs is also not approvable. Sexual abuse of a child is sexual insulting, suggesting a sexual act, touching the genitals, talking sexually, showing nude pictures or porn or bribing to sexual acts.

In Finland the age of consent is 16, which means that a person over 18 years is not allowed to have any sexual contact with someone under 16 years. The purpose of this law is to protect children from sexual abuse.

Child marriages and arranged marriages, meaning forcing someone to marry another one are also against the law. Neither is no one to be forced to marry abroad.

STATUS OF WOMEN

Finland has agreed on the contract of the status of women as defined by the United Nations. The contract is about equality and it declares that women are to be treated the same as men.

Women have the same right to study, work and to choose their own profession. Each woman has the right to choose who she wants to marry or if she wants to get married at all.

A woman can also choose to divorce if she wants to. Women also have the right to choose if they want to have children or not and to use birth control to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

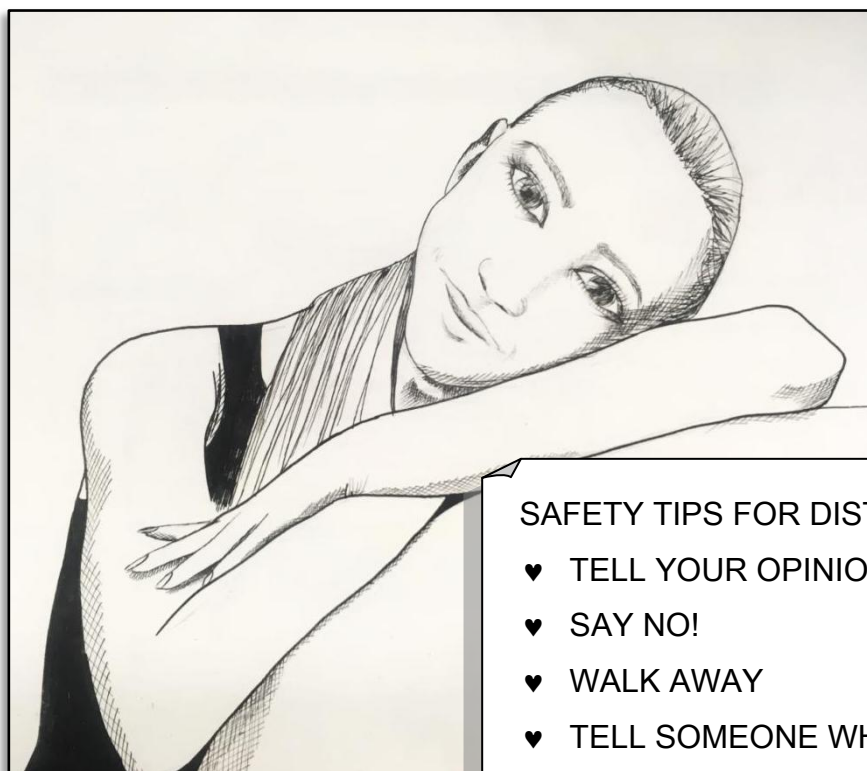
SAFETY SKILLS

In Finland every life is considered valuable.

According to law everyone has the right to be untouched and safe.

Everyone has the right to have his/her own opinions.

Knowing safety skills helps you to protect yourself against dishonouring and insulting behaviour. You have the right to put limits for others on how you are to be treated or spoken to. You are worth being treated well. You have a right to be and feel safe.



SAFETY TIPS FOR DISTRESSING OCCASIONS:

- ♥ TELL YOUR OPINION LOUD AND CLEAR
- ♥ SAY NO!
- ♥ WALK AWAY
- ♥ TELL SOMEONE WHAT HAS HAPPENED AND ASK FOR HELP

SERVICES

SEXUAL HEALTH AND SEXUAL RIGHTS

If you feel that your sexual rights have been discriminated, please contact your **public health nurse** or **social worker**.

MONIKA multicultural women's association has a national helpline for immigrant women who have faced violence. The helpline 09 692 2304 answers Mon-Fri from 9 am to 4 pm.

If you have faced war or other violence in your past that affects your life, it is important to discuss the matter with your public health nurse or doctor for a referral to the psychiatric clinic. There you can deal with your past with the help of a professional.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (STDs)

You are entitled to free STD testings. Contact your **health clinic** if you have symptoms indicating to a STD or if you have had unprotected sex. You will be given information on where to get tested.

BREASTFEEDING

Imetyksen tuki ry is an organization supporting breastfeeding and having supporting groups. The meetings are free of charge and open for everyone. Go to www.imetys.fi to find out where and when the group in your area gets together.

FAMILY, FAMILY PLANNING AND CONTRACEPTION

Väestöliitto, the family federation of Finland offers consultation on family matters and parenting on phone and e-mail. Call number (09) 2280 5141 or 050 325 7173 if you want service in English, Finnish or Russian.

The number 050 325 6450 offers service in Finnish, Kurdish (Sorani), Dari and Farsi.

You can send e-mail to the address *kotipuu@vaestoliitto.fi* in following languages: Finnish, Kurdish (Sorani), Dari, Farsi, Russian, Somali, English and Swedish. The e-mails are answered within 3 days.

Väestöliitto offers also peer groups for multicultural parents. To hear more please contact the number (09) 2280 5141 or (09) 2280 5145 or send e-mail to *kotipuu@vaestoliitto.fi* .

If you need family planning or contraception services please contact the **contraception or family planning clinic** in your area.

INFERTILITY

Infertility testings and treatments take place in **fertility clinics**, for example. You can also book an appointment in a private fertility clinic, where you don't need a referral from your doctor.

The fertility clinics in Finland are listed on the following website:

www.parempaaelamaa.fi/lapsettomuus/lapsettomuusklinikat.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

MONIKA multicultural women's association has a national helpline for immigrant women who have faced violence. The helpline 09 692 2304 answers Mon-Fri from 9 am – 4 pm.

The Shelter Mona is a place where immigrant women and their children from all around Finland can seek shelter if staying home feels dangerous. The shelter is situated at a secret address. The number 045 639 6274 answers around the clock.

The Federation of Mother and Child homes and shelters helps children and families in difficult situations that include or may include violence. On the website www.turvakoti.net you can find information on domestic violence and also where the nearest shelter is situated. The phone numbers of the shelters are answered around the clock.

If you have faced sexual violence you can contact the rape crisis center **Tukinainen** on the free helpline 0800 97899, Mon-Thu from 9 am to 3 pm, Saturday, Sunday and on holidays from 3 pm to 9 pm. The service is available in English or Finnish.

Miehen Linja is a service for immigrant men who have used domestic violence or who fear that they might use violence in their family. At the helpline 09 276 62899 you get services in English, Finnish, Swedish, Greek, French or in your own language via an interpreter. The service is open from Mon-Fri from 8 am to 4 pm.

You can also get help through your local **social office**, the **health clinic**, **family counselling** and the **family counselling of the Evangelical Lutheran Church**. For more information on where to get help, please go to:

www.infopankki.fi/en/living-in-finland/problem-situations/violence

CHILD PROTECTION

The website www.lastensuojelu.info shares information on child protection in following languages: Finnish, Plain language, English, Swedish, French, Somali, Arabic, Persia and Kurdish.

If a child is in direct danger call the common emergency telephone number 112. You can also contact the **social stand-by service** from you area in child welfare issues at any time.

STATUS OF WOMEN

The **MONIKA multicultural women's association** offers in many situations.

IF:

- you are being threatened or if you can't leave your home to see friends and to run errands without permission
- you fear that you are forced to marry against your will
- you have faced sexual harassment or abuse

please contact the telephone number 09 692 2304, where you get service in many different languages from Mon-Fri from 9 am to 4 pm.

The helpline from the **Shelter Mona** 045 639 6274 answers around the clock.

SAFETY SKILLS

If someone has harassed or intimidated you or treated you badly it is important to report to a person you trust.

If a crime happens call the **victim support helpline** 0203 16116 on Mondays and Tuesdays from 1 pm to 9 pm, Wed-Fri from 5 pm to 9 pm.

The website www.riku.fi shares information in different languages on what to do if you are victim or witness in a crime.

The common emergency telephone number is 112

NOTES

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