

*Children's guide*

**2017  
EDITION**



**How to protect yourself  
from sexual abuse?**

You have most likely heard about sexual abuse. Many children are victims of it. They often do not realise that what an adult has done to them is a crime. This guide will help you know whether you or another child close to you is a victim and what to do to get help.



In every country almost one in five children is sexually abused. Rich or poor, no child is safe.

In more than 90% of the cases, the children, both boys and girls, are abused by someone very close to them. The abuser can be a man or a woman, but more often it is a man.

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# 1. What is sexual abuse?

It is when an adult or another child who is the same age as you or older:

- asks you to show them your private parts
- touches or caresses your private parts

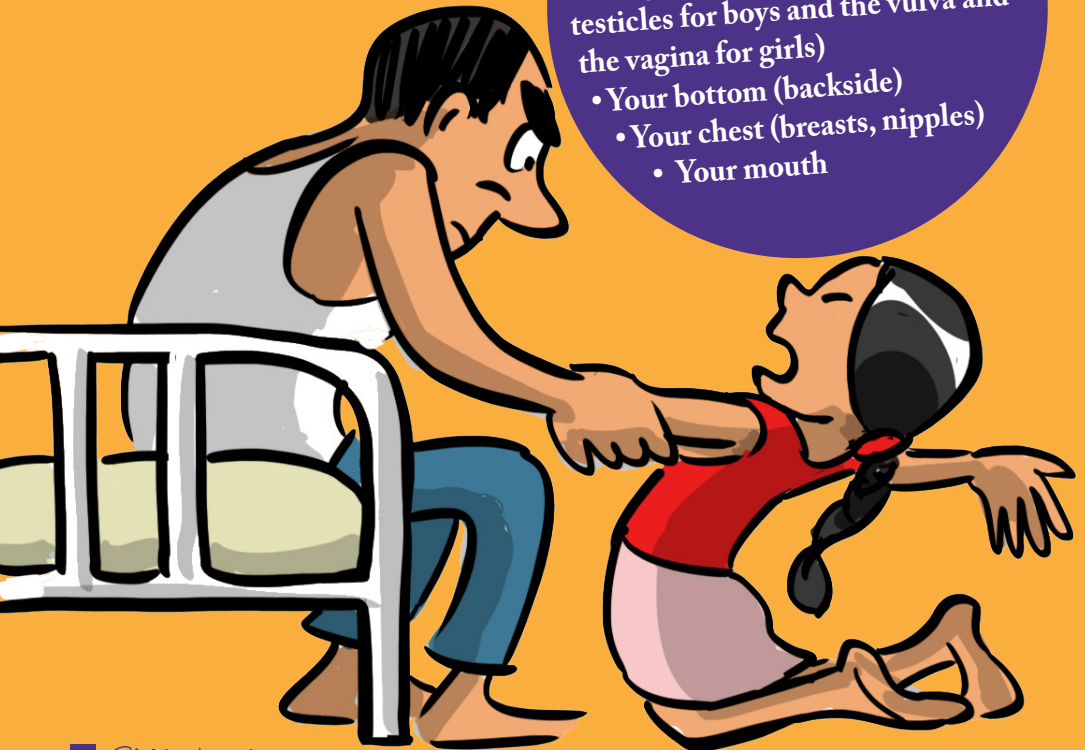
It is when an adult or another child who is the same age as you or older:

- asks you to look at, touch or caress their private parts
- asks you to look at sex pictures or videos.

**What are your private parts?**

Your genitals (the penis and testicles for boys and the vulva and the vagina for girls)

- Your bottom (backside)
- Your chest (breasts, nipples)
- Your mouth



## 2. Why is it serious & forbidden?



**It is illegal.** The law forbids anyone from being violent to a child, whether it be in what they say, how they behave or what they do. Sexual acts involving a child are forbidden and are punishable by law.

**A child who has been sexually abused, even just once, can as a result suffer for the rest of their life.** These actions or situations can make you feel embarrassed, disgusted, frightened or ashamed. Even if it does not disgust you, even if you like it, it is still illegal because you are a child.

# 3. Who is allowed to see you without any clothes on or touch your body?

**Your body belongs to you.**

Everyone else must respect it. You have the right to refuse being seen without any clothes on or touched by an adult, even if they belong to your family and you like them a lot.

It is not a sexual assault when:

- A doctor touches your body and examines you to see whether you are well. But they must do so either in their office or at a hospital and in the presence of one of your parents.
- A mother breastfeeds her baby.
- The parents change their baby's nappy or bathe their baby.



## 4. Is a hug or a kiss a form of abuse?

**Some gestures of affection are normal.**

If your father or mother kisses or hugs you, they are showing their love for you. They are not assaulting you.

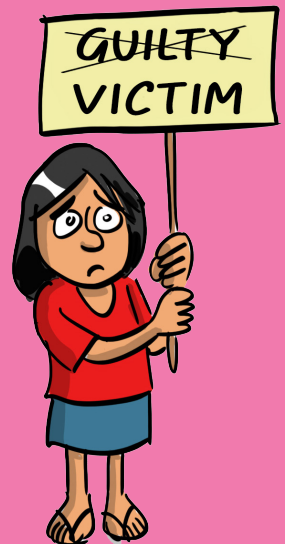
Touching or kissing your genitals, chest, mouth or bottom is forbidden. When you are a teenager or an adult, you will choose who touches your body.

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## 5. Is a child who has been abused guilty?

**No, an abused child is a victim.**

All the children in the world should be protected from sexual abuse. It is illegal. Very often, if you have been abused, you are frightened, you feel ashamed and guilty. It is the person who assaulted you who should feel ashamed because they are guilty. The child is not responsible for what happened. It is not their fault if they have been abused, whatever other people might say.



## 6. Who are the abusers?

An abuser can be someone older than you, a teenager or an adult. A man or a woman. Very often it is someone you know well and like a lot, such as a family member, a neighbour, a group leader or a teacher. Sometimes they can be threatening or nasty to you.

They can also be nice to you and try to make you believe that what they have done is perfectly normal, that they love you and that it is a secret between the two of you. Quite the opposite! These acts are not at all normal and must not be kept secret, even if you are asked to.





# 7. What is a paedophile?

It is an adult that wants to carry out sexual acts with a child. Some paedophiles actually do so and assault children. They use children for their own pleasure. In so doing, they commit a criminal offence.

Anybody who carries out sexual acts involving children is a child sex offender. This is punishable by law. Child sex offenders know that they are doing something wrong, serious and illegal. They hide so that they can carry out these acts.



# 8. How can you be careful?

## **Your body is yours.**

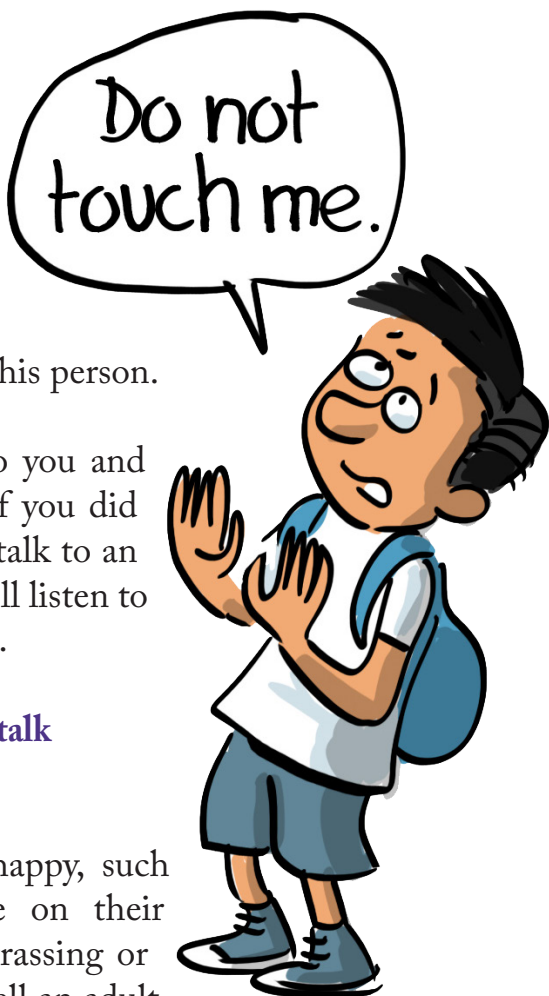
You can refuse that anyone touches you, even if:

- you know the person well or you like them a lot
- this has happened to you before
- you find it difficult to refuse this person.

If the person does not listen to you and does not respect your NO, or if you did not manage to say NO, go and talk to an adult you trust, someone who will listen to you, believe you and protect you.

## **Beware of bad secrets and always talk about them.**

Good secrets make you feel happy, such as giving someone a surprise on their birthday. Bad secrets are embarrassing or frightening. Don't be afraid to tell an adult you trust about a bad secret.



## 9. Why must you not trust the Internet?

Quite simply because paedophiles also use the Internet. They hide their real identity to trap children. If a stranger asks you awkward questions, tell an adult you trust. Ideally, you should be with an adult when you go on the Internet, especially if you are under 13.

Even if the person seems nice and you become friends, they can still harm you. Therefore, the golden rule is never to give any personal details to somebody on the Internet.

Don't post photos of yourself without any clothes on or in just a swimsuit.



# 10. What can you do if you are a victim or if you know someone who is?

You must tell an adult you trust. Even if the aggressor is someone close to you, or someone you like a lot. Even if they tell you that it is a secret and that you must not tell anyone.

- When you tell what has happened, you can be helped and protected.
- You can also help the other child who is a victim.
- You will thus stop that person from hurting other children.

**Remember:** you are not responsible or guilty, if you have suffered a sexual attack.

# 11. Who can you talk to?

ALO?  
113?

You can talk to an adult you trust, such as a family member, a teacher, head-teacher, psychologist, counsellor, school nurse, or a friend's parents. It is important that this person believes you and protects you.

You can call 113 any time day and night. There will always be someone to take your call, listen and help you.

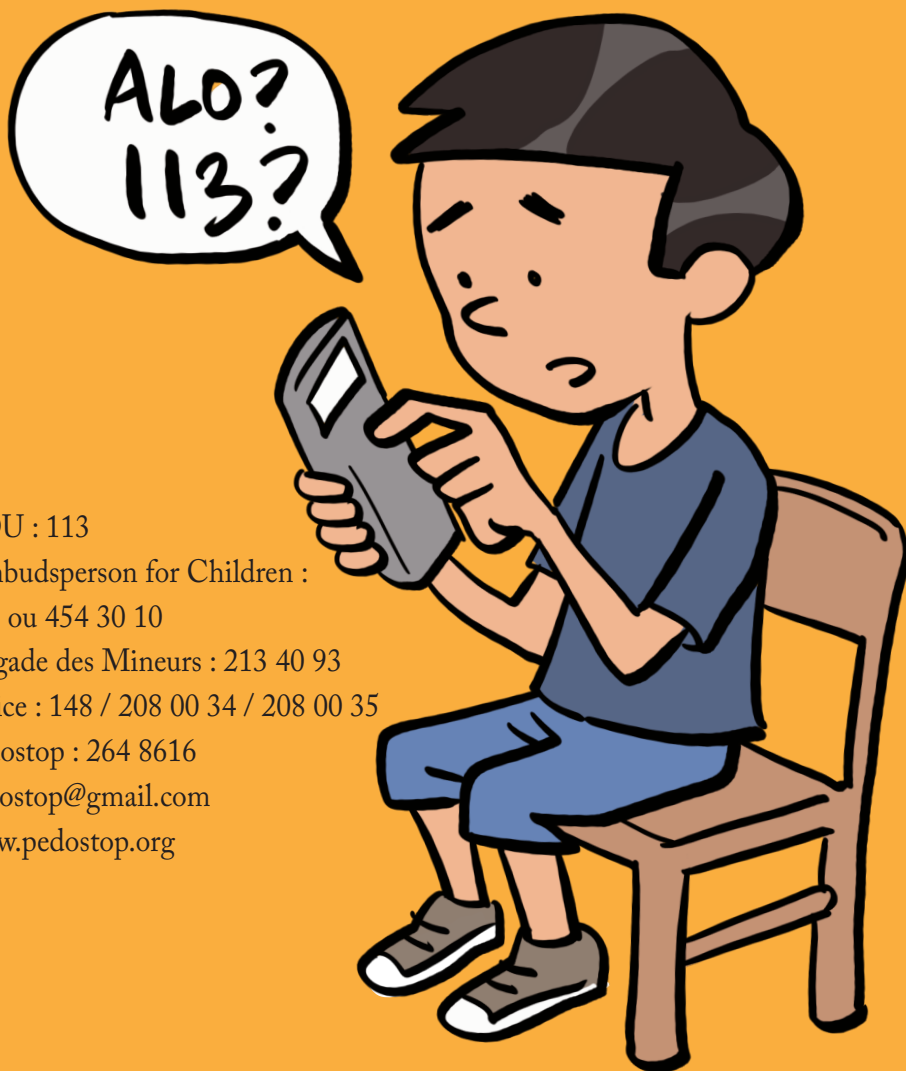
You can go a police station. The police officers are there to listen to you, record your complaint and make an inquiry.



## 12. What can you do if nobody listens to you?

If the adult that you spoke to does not listen to you properly, and does not help you, talk to someone else. If you are afraid to talk, you can write it down. Remember that doing sexual acts with a child is punishable by law. It is not easy to talk about such things, but what you have suffered is very serious. It is important that you are protected, helped and that nobody does it again to you.

# Useful numbers



- CDU : 113
- Ombudsperson for Children :  
177 ou 454 30 10
- Brigade des Mineurs : 213 40 93
- Police : 148 / 208 00 34 / 208 00 35
- Pédostop : 264 8616  
[pedostop@gmail.com](mailto:pedostop@gmail.com)  
[www.pedostop.org](http://www.pedostop.org)

# STOPPING SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST CHILDREN:

## Taking action so that they suffer no more

Given the number of cases of violence against children and the spread of sexual abuse, we decided to take action. Thus, La Sentinelle Ltd launched a campaign jointly with Pédostop, Dialekt and LEAD, supported by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. This action plan started at the end of June 2015 with a national information campaign aimed at adults and focussing on the signs that sexually abused children might show.

The final phase of this campaign is the publication of two guides, one for parents and the other for children. We hope that this will help raise awareness of the social evil that is sexual abuse against children, break the silence and increase the number of cases reported to the various authorities responsible for child protection.

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