

# MERCY CLINICS, INC. PRACTICE GUIDELINE

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Studies have revealed that 14% to 28% of women seen in primary care clinics have been a victim of domestic violence at some point in their lives. Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviors used to control another person. This issue requires evaluation and intervention similar to efforts in child abuse. To this end Mercy Clinics, Inc. endorses the following guideline.

1. All independent adult patients should be routinely screened for domestic violence as a vital sign.
  - Appropriate questions are: “Are you in a safe environment?” or “Do you feel safe at home”
  - Frequently an abusing partner will be in the room. Try to ask when the patient is alone.
2. All Mercy Clinics will have available educational information including a list of referral sources for victims of domestic violence.
  - Iowa Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-942-0333
    - 24 hours crisis support
    - Access to safe shelter and support groups
3. Persons who feel they are unsafe should be advised that help is available and directed towards this help.