

Going on a First Date

A Home Office research study published in 2002 found that only eight per cent of rapes were carried out by strangers. Women were most at risk from their partners, former partners, men they are dating and acquaintances. Use the following advice to develop your own personal safety skills and strategies to help reduce risk to your personal safety.

- If you are replying to a lonely heart's advert, never give personal details such as your address or surname. It is not unknown for address details to be obtained by having just a telephone number, so be guarded about giving out your telephone number.
- Always arrange to meet in a busy public place, preferably in the daytime, until you are sure of the other person's identity and feel comfortable about them.
- Try and take a friend along, at least at the beginning, to meet your date. Work out a pre-arranged signal with your friend to indicate whether you would prefer your friend to stay with you.
- Tell someone where you are going, who with (including name, phone number and address) and when you will be back.
- Initially don't go home with your date, DON'T invite them back to your home or accept a lift.
- Plan how you are going to get home.
- Carry a personal alarm and know how to use it to shock and disorientate an assailant so that you can get away.
- Pay attention to your instincts. If you feel uneasy about someone, there may be a reason. Don't tell yourself that you're being silly, be careful not to give them personal details about yourself and don't arrange a second date.