

AFTER A SEXUAL ASSAULT - SEEKING MEDICAL ATTENTION

Important information for adult survivors of sexual assault in Prince Edward Island

After experiencing a sexual assault, you have a lot of decisions to make, including whether to tell anyone and whether to get medical attention or report to police. We hope this document will help you make the best decision for yourself.

Why is it important to seek medical attention after a sexual assault?

- To assess and take care of any physical injuries and/or emotional trauma resulting from the assault
- To test for possible infections and/or pregnancy and begin treatment if desired
- To have forensic evidence collected

What happens if I go to the hospital?

- You can expect to be believed and treated with respect, compassion, and dignity
- You can expect to wait in a private room in the Emergency Department.
- You can expect that your hospital records will be kept confidential.
- You have the choice about reporting to the police. Hospital staff will not report the assault without your permission unless your situation requires reporting under the PEI Child Protection or Adult Protection Acts.
- You can have a support person with you. However, they may be asked to leave the room during some parts of the examination.
- Emergency Department health care providers are trained to provide Enhanced Emergency Sexual Assault Services (EESAS). You can expect that all procedures relating to the medical exam, treatment, and evidence collection will be explained fully to you. It is your decision to take part in any or all the procedures, and you can change your mind at any time.
- If you consent to have evidence collected, you can have the evidence collected at the Emergency Department and stored anonymously (without your name or any identifying information on the evidence kit) for up to one year. During that year, if you choose, you can reach out to police or Victim Services and give police permission to access this evidence.

If you go to the hospital, it is your choice:

- **To have a physical exam and medical treatment only.** *You will be examined for injuries, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections, prescribe any medications that may be needed and given follow up instructions and referrals to community resources.*
- **To have a sexual assault evidence kit completed** *and given to police right away, who will follow up with you later to take your statement.*
- **To have the evidence kit completed anonymously** *and have it stored for up to one year; during that time you can reach out to RCMP or Victim Services to give police permission to access the evidence and take your statement.*

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What is a sexual assault evidence kit (also known as a “rape kit” or “forensic evidence kit”)?

A sexual assault evidence kit is a box that holds the paperwork, swabs, bags, and containers used to collect and store evidence from your body.

The nurse and/or doctor who completes the kit will ask questions about what happened to you to determine what evidence to collect. The kit can take up to three hours to complete and may feel intrusive at times. You can refuse any part of the kit at any time.

- Evidence can usually be collected up to 72 hours after an assault.
- A completed kit will provide useful evidence if you decide to report to police.
- Kits can be completed anonymously—without any of your identifying information on the kit—and stored for up to a year.
- If you decide to have a kit completed and police contacted, they do not remain in the room while the evidence for the kit is collected.
- You can still report to police if you decide not to have a kit collected.