

# Sexual Assault Nurse Examinations

## Frequently Asked Questions

A sexual assault nurse examination is a free, voluntary medical examination to provide medical treatment and collect evidence after a sexual assault, as well as provide support and resources. The exam is completed by a team that includes a specially trained nurse and a sexual assault patient advocate.

Exams can be emotionally difficult and draining. The forensic nurse ensures you are healthy and safe. An advocate is present to help and comfort you throughout the process, ensure you know your rights, and make sure you have the support you need during and after the exam.

### What are the Benefits of getting an exam?

- It's free (insurance will not be billed for the costs of evidence collection);
- In our private examination suite, you will receive a medical assessment of any minor injuries or trauma related to the sexual assault;
- You will access preventative treatment (prophylaxis) for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV, and/or obtain emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy;
- We will keep physical evidence for up to five years and written documentation indefinitely, giving you time to decide if you want to report to law enforcement.
- If you decide to report your sexual assault, a medical forensic exam increases the potential for prosecution and provides an expert witness testimony by the forensic nurse;
- You will have immediate support by a trained sexual assault advocate.

### What is a Sexual Assault Kit?

- The Sexual Assault Kit contains all of the forensic evidence that was collected during the exam. It can include swabs, injury documentation, and clothing. This Kit is what is released to law enforcement, if you choose to report.

# FAQ Continued...

## What does the process look like?

*All of these steps are optional and none are mandatory to receive our services.*

1. **Meet with a specially trained advocate.** Your advocate will explain the exam process, answer any questions, and make sure you understand all the options going forward. Your advocate will stay with you throughout the exam process.
2. **Consent forms:** The nurse will explain the nature and purpose of each step of the exam.
3. **Medical History:** A very brief medical history is needed, with only relevant information.
4. **History of the Event:** This is where you explain what happened. This part helps guide the physical exam process.
5. **Physical Exam:** A head-to-toe physical exam. The nurse can potentially document injuries, collect swabs for DNA, take photographs of injuries, and perform a speculum exam.
6. **STI and Pregnancy Prevention:** Based on the description of the sexual assault, the nurse will discuss potential risks for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV, and/or pregnancy, and provide options for preventative care and treatment.
7. **Discharge & Follow-Up:** At the end of the exam, you will be provided information about follow-up medical care and available resources to help you with the healing process. You will also receive a follow-up call from an advocate within the next day or two, to see how you are feeling and if there is anything we can help you with.

**Consent is given throughout each step of the process,  
and you can change your mind at anytime.**

# FAQ Continued...

## Do I have to report to Law Enforcement?

- It is optional to release your kit to law enforcement. If you choose not to release your kit to the police at the time of the exam, it will be securely stored at our facility, in case you decide to release it to the police at a later date.

## What does it mean to release my kit?

- When you sign the form to release your kit to law enforcement, you will be initiating a criminal investigation. Once the kit is released to law enforcement, our facility cannot get it back.
- If you have not yet reported, law enforcement will contact you for a statement and the contents of the kit will undergo laboratory analysis and forensic testing. Releasing the kit may increase the likelihood that the case will result in prosecution.
- Once your kit has been released, you can track the status and location of your kit using the Track-Kit code that was provided to you at the time of the exam (located in your folder).

## What is the criteria for getting an exam?

- Within 120 hours (5 days) of the assault. In some cases, exams can be offered up to 10 days after the assault. An advocate and nurse can help you determine if an exam is going to be beneficial for you.
- At Resilience, the survivor must be 13 or older. If the survivor is younger than 13, please call for a referral.

# FAQ Continued...

## How do I prepare for an exam?

- You can receive a medical forensic exam up to 5 days (in some circumstances, up to 10 days) after a sexual assault, however the sooner it is completed, the better. Our nurses are available 24/7.
- Try to avoid activities that could potentially diminish evidence, such as: bathing, showering, using the restroom, and/or changing clothes. However, you can still receive an exam even if you have done any of these activities.
- Place any belongings you feel could be helpful, such as the clothes you were wearing if you already changed, in a paper bag to safely preserve evidence.

## What do I need to do to receive an exam?

- Call our 24- Hour Help Line to speak to an advocate about an exam 800.848.5991 (English) or 866.728.2131 (Spanish). Translation services available in all languages.
- Walk into our Holland Program Office during regular business hours.
- If you have any immediate medical concerns, go to the nearest Emergency Room.

## Where will I receive my exam?

- SANE exams take place in our private examination room suite located at our Holland Program Office.

**If you have any questions about Exams,  
please reach out to us:**

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**24-Hour Help Line: 1-800-848-5991  
Hablamos Español: 1-866-728-2131  
Safe E-mail: GinnyP411@gmail.com**

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