



Post-Sexual Assault Medical-Forensic Exams Options for Survivors

What is a medical-forensic exam?

Everybody seeking care after an assault deserves support and choice about what happens next. A medical-forensic exam is conducted by a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) and medical providers, usually at a medical facility. This exam is focused on ensuring that you are safe, given necessary medical attention, follow-up services, and that your questions and concerns are heard and addressed.

Everything that happens during an exam is your choice, and you can stop the exam at any time. Your examiner will support you in whatever choice you make.

You may choose to have a support person such as a family member, friend, or local advocate with you for parts or all of the exam.

Exams are
available to
survivors of
ALL genders

What if I am worried about pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections?

A SANE can discuss your risk for pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STDs/STIs), and HIV during an exam. Medications to prevent sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy are most effective if given within 5 days of the assault. Medications to prevent HIV transmission may be given up to 3 days after the assault.

Do I have to pay for the exam?

The Sexual Assault Victims' Emergency Medical Response Fund (SAVE Fund) covers the cost of most sexual assault-related medical care and medications when the exam takes place within one week of the assault. It also covers the cost of five counseling sessions to be used within 18 months of the assault. A SANE will guide you through the paperwork to access this fund.

Prescriptions and follow-up care, as well as treatments unrelated to the assault, may be billed to your insurance or have to be paid for out of pocket. A SANE can talk with you about your options, including avenues for financial assistance.



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Do I have to report to police?

You may access medical care regardless of whether you report to police or not. In most cases, adults between the ages of 18-64 get to choose whether they want to report a sexual assault to police. If you do not want to report, you may choose to have evidence collected in an anonymous kit that will be stored safely, so that you have the option to report in the future. Evidence will not be tested without a police report.

SANEs follow Oregon mandatory reporting laws for healthcare professionals, including sexual assault of patients under 18 or 65 and older; vulnerable adults with severe disability or mental illness; and serious non-accidental physical injury of any type. Police and/or DHS must be contacted if any of these circumstances apply to you, but you still get to choose how much or little you talk with them.

What is evidence collection?

During your exam, you have the option to have evidence collected. This may include cotton swabs from areas of your body, clothing collection, or collection of other items that may have DNA on them. If you choose to have evidence collected, your examiner will check in with you every single step of the way, to make sure you want to continue and are comfortable.

Typically, evidence collection as part of the physical exam is an option up to 5 days after the time of the assault. Collection of clothing and other items may have a longer time limit.

If you want physical evidence collected, consider limiting activities such as eating, drinking, bathing, douching, or using drugs, in order to best preserve possible evidence on your body.

However, these activities do not prevent you from accessing evidence collection as a part of your exam.

Exams are
about your
health and
safety.

Will I get in trouble for illegal activity?

SANEs will not report your drug or alcohol use. If you choose to work with police, they typically prioritize person crimes (such as assault) more highly than other illegal activity. A SANE and advocate can discuss your options and concerns in more depth.