

Medical Forensic Examination

What happens during a medical forensic exam?

- A medical professional will ask you questions about what happened during the sexual assault or rape.
- You will be checked from head to toe and any injuries will be documented.
- Samples may be collected from areas of your body that may have DNA from the person who hurt you.
- Additional evidence may be collected that may be helpful if you choose to report to law enforcement.
- Medications may be offered to prevent sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy.
- The medical professional will discuss your risk of getting HIV from the sexual assault or rape.
- The medical professional will answer your questions during any part of the exam.
- You may need additional medical care beyond the medical forensic exam.

What happens to the evidence collected?

Evidence collected during this process will only be tested if a report is made to law enforcement.

The hospital does not perform any tests on the evidence that has been collected.

When a report is made to law enforcement, the local law enforcement agency will in most cases transfer the evidence from the hospital to the appropriate agency for forensic testing.

Practices vary across the state. Talk to the medical professional about what happens to the evidence collected from the exam. Your local sexual assault advocate can also help find out how long the evidence will be stored.

What are my rights?

Choosing to be seen after a sexual assault or rape is about your health and safety. You have the right to decline or accept any part of the exam at any time.

You can request that an advocate, if available, stay with you during your medical forensic examination.

Cost of the Examination

Medical forensic examination

Under Minnesota law, the county in which the sexual assault or rape occurred is responsible for the cost of collecting evidence during your medical forensic examination. The **county must pay** regardless of whether or not you report to law enforcement.

After your medical forensic examination has been performed, the county may be reimbursed from your insurance with your permission. Counties must obtain your approval prior to billing your insurance. Whether or not the county utilizes your insurance is **your choice**.

Other medical care

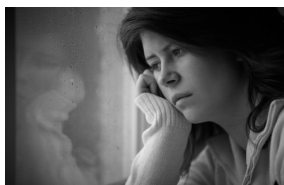
You are responsible for other costs associated with the medical care provided by the hospital, including certain medications and treatment of injuries. If you do not wish to have your insurance billed for the costs associated with medical treatment, please speak to the hospital billing office.

The hospital will bill you or your insurance for these costs. All hospitals have charity care and financial assistance programs available if you need help with your medical expenses.

After your hospital visit

If you receive a bill for the medical forensic examination, call your local sexual assault program for help in contacting the county. Advocates from your local sexual assault program can also assist with other exam payment questions and concerns.

Go to www.rapehelpmn.org to find your closest program and to get connected with an advocate.



Next Steps

Deciding to make a report

A victim of a sexual assault or rape does not have to report the crime to law enforcement. A sexual assault advocate can provide more information to victims about options.

Minnesota has statutory rights for crime victims who report the crime to law enforcement. These rights are designed to promote the protection of the victim, provide information to the victim, enable participation in any prosecution process that might take place, and provide financial assistance to the victim. The victim may request information from the law enforcement agency about the status of the sexual assault examination kit including the date it was submitted to a forensic lab for testing, the date results were received, and whether or not a DNA profile was obtained. For more information, contact your local sexual assault program or go to ojp.dps.mn.gov.

If you fear for your safety

If you fear for your safety or fear contact from the person who hurt you, you can seek a civil protective order from the court. The judge can order that the offender have no contact with you and stay away from you.

There are two types of civil protective orders: **Order for Protection** and **Harassment Restraining Order**. The type of order that would be appropriate for you depends on the type of relationship you have with the person who hurt you and the nature of the violence or harassment that has occurred. You can file a petition for these orders at no cost.

Contact your local sexual assault program or your local courthouse for information about the process.

Go to www.rapehelpmn.org to find your closest program.

Financial Assistance

Victims of sexual assault and rape who report to law enforcement may apply for financial assistance from the Minnesota Crime Victims Reparation Board if they have suffered economic loss as a result of the crime.

The **Crime Victims Reparations Board** can pay for expenses such as counseling services, lost wages, and medical costs, including prescriptions.

Forms and information can be obtained from:

651.201.7300 • 1.888.622.8799 • ojp.dps.mn.gov

Help is Available

Services are available to you free of charge from your local sexual assault program, including 24-hour hotlines, crisis intervention, support groups and advocacy.

An advocate from a sexual assault program can:

- Help you understand the topics described in this brochure in greater detail.
- Help you understand how your emotional and physical reactions are a normal response.
- Listen to your feelings and concerns.
- Help you understand and weigh your options.
- Explain the legal process to you if you are considering reporting the crime.
- Contact others on your behalf with your permission.

Sexual assault programs are legally and ethically required to protect your confidentiality. Your rights to privacy will be explained to you when you seek services.

Contact the local sexual assault program listed on the back of this brochure or, if none listed, call the Minnesota Day One Line **866-223-1111** or go to **www.rapehelpmn.org** for more information and referral to local services.



No one has the right to touch, force, threaten or have sexual contact with you without your consent. No matter the circumstances, you did not deserve to be sexually assaulted or raped.

Following a sexual assault or rape, you might feel helpless, lonely, shocked, angry, fearful, depressed, anxious, embarrassed or ashamed. Sexual assault is a traumatic event; each person reacts in a different way and experiences a variety of emotions.

Finding Help

To find local 24-hour sexual assault crisis lines:

www.rapehelpmn.org

For referral to other local services:

Minnesota Day One Line
1.866.223.1111

United Way 211 - 24 hour information and referral
211 or 800-543-7709

For information on eligibility for financial compensation and forms:

Crime Victims Reparations Board
651-201-7300 • 1-888-622-8799 • ojp.dps.mn.gov

To request to be notified of an inmate's release from jail or to obtain other custody information:

Minnesota VINE
Victim Information and Notification Everyday
877-MN4-VINE • 877-664-8463 • www.vinelink.com

Safe at Home Address Confidentiality Program

www.sos.state.mn.us • 866-723-3035

Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault

Fact sheets and educational resources: www.mncasa.org

If you are a crime victim or witness and you believe your rights have been violated:

Crime Victim Justice Unit
651.-201-7310 • 1-800-247-0390 ext. 3

If you need support in the healing process from a sexual assault or rape, your local sexual assault program stands ready to help.

Prepared by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs

Victims of Sexual Assault

Your rights and resources



Important information for victims seeking medical care or a forensic medical examination following a sexual assault or rape.

*Your health and wellbeing
are the priority.*