

Time-Sensitive Information

The first few days after an assault can be a very confusing time for survivors, who often have many questions and face difficult decisions. The survivor may not want to or be ready to make any decisions. This is normal and okay. You can use the information below to help survivors better understand what the options are.

What You Can Do



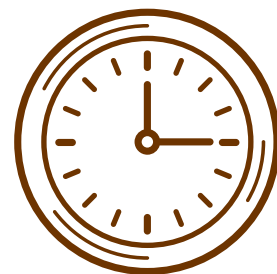
While survivors are finding their way toward healing and justice, they may reach out to you, as a professional, for help or support. This handout provides basic information you can share with the survivor. You can find more information at survivorape.org or through your local rape crisis center.



Going to the Hospital

Survivors of all genders may choose to go to a hospital emergency room for medical care and/or evidence collection. Hospital emergency rooms can provide the following:

- Care for medical issues resulting from the assault.
- Preventative treatment against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and pregnancy. These treatments are most effective when taken as soon as possible after an assault.
- **Within 96 hours (four days):** Toxicology testing, if there are signs that drugs or alcohol may have facilitated the assault. Test results may take up to 12 weeks.
- **Within 120 hours (five days):** An exam for evidence collection. A survivor does not need to report to the police to have evidence collected. If they do decide to have evidence collected, they may have more options in the future. The survivor does not have to decide right away what to do with the evidence.



Some hospitals participate in the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program. At a SANE site, care is usually provided by a nurse with specialized training in the medical and forensic/legal needs of survivors. To find a SANE site in your area, visit survivorape.org. Many local rape crisis centers can also arrange for an advocate to be available for support.

Evidence Collection and Legal Process

The sexual assault exam and evidence collection kit, sometimes called a "rape kit" or "rape exam," serve two goals:

- To provide the best immediate care for the survivor
- To collect evidence that may be used to prosecute the crime

Things to know about the exam and kit

- They are free; a survivor should not be charged by the hospital.
- An evidence collection kit can be done and stored anonymously up to the statute of limitations without reporting to the police.

For adult survivors, the survivor is the only person who can decide if reporting to the police is right for them. A report to the police permits an investigation of the assault. For more information about the process, visit surviverape.org.

What happens after evidence is collected

Evidence collection does not answer the question "Was I raped?" The exam may or may not show physical evidence. If physical evidence is not found, it does not mean that nothing happened; it just means no physical evidence was present at the time of collection.

➔ **If the survivor reports to the police**, results of both DNA evidence and toxicology testing will go to the detective assigned to the case in the city or town where the assault took place. The results will be analyzed whether or not the case moves forward.



All reported kits can be tracked online at ma.track-kit.us.

➔ **If the survivor does *not* report to the police**, the kit will be preserved anonymously up to the statute of limitations. Survivors will receive a kit number at the time of the exam. DNA evidence in the kit will not be tested unless a survivor reports to the police. If toxicology testing was performed, a survivor can get information and eventual results by calling the Forensic Information line at 866-463-3799.

Additional resources

- **Rape crisis centers:** Free, confidential services for survivors and their loved ones; may include counseling, legal advocacy, and assistance with health, housing, financial, and safety needs.
- **Victim compensation:** Available through MA Attorney General's office, this fund can provide financial assistance for expenses like medical and dental care, counseling, bedding and clothing, and lost wages.

Learn more: surviverape.org | info line: 866-463-3799