



AFTER A SEXUAL ASSAULT

It was not your fault.

You deserve care, support, and to be heard and believed. You are in control of what happens next.

GET TO SAFETY

If you are in immediate danger, call 911. For urgent injuries or medical needs, seek emergency care. You do not have to decide about reporting before getting medical care.

PRESERVE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

- ☐ If you can, try not to shower, bathe, wash, or change clothes before an exam; this may help preserve evidence.
- ☐ If you already changed, place each item in a separate clean paper bag if available. Avoid plastic bags.
- ☐ Do not delay medical care. Even if you have showered, changed, eaten, or used the bathroom, you can still get care and ask about an exam.

PRESERVE MESSAGES AND IMAGES

- ☐ Keep conversations, texts, call logs, emails, photos, and social messages as they are. Do not delete or edit them.
- ☐ If safe, note usernames, profile links, dates, and times. Save copies securely; do not forward or publicly post them.
- ☐ You can mute or block for your safety after preserving what you can. If an intimate image may show someone under 18, do not download, forward, or repost it; ask an advocate or law enforcement how to preserve it safely.

ASK ABOUT A SAFE EXAM

- ☐ A sexual assault forensic exam can check for injuries, offer medical care, and collect evidence. The timing window varies; contact a provider as soon as you can.
- ☐ You can ask for an exam even if you are not ready to make a police report or pursue charges. Ask whether non-reporting/anonymous options are available and how evidence is stored and for how long; procedures vary.
- ☐ The examiner should explain each step and ask permission. You can ask questions, request a break, decline a step, or stop. Ask whether an advocate or support person can join you. An exam does not require you to decide today whether to participate in an investigation.

REMEMBER

If you have already showered, changed, or used the bathroom, you can still seek medical care and ask about an exam. You deserve to be treated with care.



AFTER A SEXUAL ASSAULT

What an investigation may look like

Steps and timelines vary. You can ask what to expect and request support along the way. Speaking with an investigator or getting an exam does not mean you must pursue charges.

AN INVESTIGATOR MAY

- ☐ Invite you to share what you remember and ask follow-up questions.
- ☐ Ask about evidence such as messages, witnesses, camera footage, or medical information.
- ☐ Explain next steps and contact you later for additional information.

YOU CAN ASK FOR

- ☐ Breaks, clarification, or an advocate during conversations.
- ☐ Information about who will receive your information and what may happen next.
- ☐ Time to consider options. You can ask about choices without deciding to move forward today.

NATIONWIDE SUPPORT

- ☐ RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline offers free, confidential, 24/7 support.
- ☐ Call 800-656-HOPE (4673), text HOPE to 64673, or chat at rainn.org/hotline.
- ☐ You can contact RAINN for support and referrals even if you are unsure what you want to do.

YOU DESERVE SUPPORT

You may feel shocked, numb, unsure, or have mixed feelings. There is no “right” way to respond. What happened was not your fault. You deserve to be heard, believed, and treated with care.