



Title IX

Preserving Evidence and Getting Medical Attention

For emergency response procedures and resources, call 911 immediately following a Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, or Stalking.

Grace encourages you, as soon as possible, to take steps to assure your safety, but also understands that it may take time to decide whether to report an incident of sexual or physical violence to Grace and/or the police. The following suggestions to preserve evidence are offered while you decide whether to make a report.

Getting Immediate Medical Care

You may decide to seek medical care at the hospital without calling 911. If transportation is needed, Grace can provide that at no charge. You do not have to specify the details about why you are going. You may also want to consider bringing someone with you for support.

Seeking medical attention for assaults that occur as part of a sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking can provide documentation of the injuries that were sustained. Seeking medical care does not result in an automatic report to law enforcement or to Grace's Title IX office.

Medical providers can also facilitate or provide the following:

- Treatment of any injury or physical trauma
- HIV and STI testing
- Pregnancy testing
- Advice on health care concerns related to the incident
- Collection and preservation of evidence as a part of a sexual assault forensic exam for potential use in criminal prosecution

Forensic Exams and Preserving Evidence

If you are interested or undecided about pressing criminal charges, you can consent to the evidence collection process by a forensic nurse through the Ft. Wayne Sexual Assault Treatment Center.

You can request a forensic sexual assault nurse examination up to 96 hours afterward, but as soon as possible after the incident is recommended.

TO KNOW CHRIST AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN

This information may help you decide on any next steps you would like to take.

- The rape kit is an evidence collection tool that documents physical injury and gathers physical evidence (e.g., DNA, fibers, hair) that may have been transferred during the sexual assault.
- Let the nurse know if you suspect you were drugged and ask about a toxicology kit or urine sample.
- It is your choice to have evidence collected. You have the right to agree to some parts of the exam but not others, or refuse all parts of the kit.
- It is important to know that agreeing to the evidence collection process does not in any way force you to proceed with criminal charges.
- Evidence is best preserved by not washing away the evidence and collecting all the items that may have evidence on them, such as clothing or bedding. For the rape kit to be most effective, follow these guidelines:
 - Avoid cleaning up in any way, such as taking a shower, bathing, washing your hands, combing your hair, or brushing your teeth
 - Avoid using the toilet, especially if you suspect you were given a drug to incapacitate you.
 - Choose either not to change your clothes, or if you do change your clothes, put all of the clothing you were wearing at the time of the assault (and other items such as sheets and blankets) in a paper (not plastic) bag and bring the bag with you to the exam. The nurse will provide you with scrubs or sweats, or you can have someone bring clothing.
- Other evidence may also be important to preserve, such as:
 - Keeping a record of witnesses or people to whom you disclosed that you were experiencing these forms of interpersonal violence.
 - Keeping a record of all of the unwanted contact, such as text messages, emails, social media, letters, and gifts, and documenting incidents of harassment with a date, time, location, and description of the abusive or harassing behavior.
 - Having a friend take pictures of bruising or injuries.
 - Documenting any property damage.
 - Preserving any e-mails, texts, voice mails, written notes, and pictures of property damage that are useful in documenting the harm.
 - Keeping your records in a secure location that will not be found by the offender.

For more information about sexual assault forensic examinations:

- Visit RAINN's (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) [webpage](#)
- Call RAINN's 24-hour National Sexual Assault Hotline: (800) 656-HOPE
- Chat online at hotline.rainn.org.