

INFORMATION WOMEN MAY NEED TO KNOW AFTER A SEXUAL ASSAULT

1. **Question:** How soon can a pregnancy test be scheduled after a sexual assault?

Answer: A test can usually be taken and be accurate 2 weeks after unprotected intercourse.

2. **Question:** How soon can I be tested for sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS?

Answer:

Syphilis- six weeks after sexual contact;

Gonorrhea- one week after sexual contact (you may notice vaginal discharge earlier)

Chlamydia- two weeks

Genital Warts-upon outbreak

Herpes- upon outbreak

Trichomoniasis- is contracted upon contact, testing immediately

AIDS- Testing should be repeated every six months or as directed by physician

3. **Question:** I think I am pregnant as a result of rape. I do not have money for an abortion. Is there any way I can get financial assistance for this?

Answer: There are no special funds set aside for abortions. However, there is information on abortion services in the telephone book, yellow pages, and they can answer questions regarding costs and procedures.

4. **Question:** What are the chances of getting pregnant as a result of being raped?

Answer: There are truly no accurate statistics on this. A woman's health, age, regularity of periods and other factors can influence the chances of pregnancy occurring. Generally, the likelihood of pregnancy from one unprotected intercourse is low, although the probability goes up if the woman is in mid-point of her menstrual cycle.

5. **Question:** Does the hospital emergency room have to report sexual assault to the police?

Answer: No. Emergency room personnel are mandated only to report gun shot wounds, dog bites, knife wounds, and child abuse. However, parents of victims under the age of 16 must be notified.

6. **Question:** Do I have to give the emergency room people my name, address or phone number, or can I remain completely anonymous?

Answer: You will need to sign a consent form in order to be treated. However, the information you provide is handled separately from all other patient data, and you bypass the admission's clerk. It is VERY confidential. If the assault is reported to county law enforcement, the cost of collecting evidence is covered by the county in which the crime occurred. Different counties have individual policies regarding the percentage of the emergency room examination they will pay for. All other medical bills for follow-up treatment can be submitted to the Minnesota Crime Victim's Fund. In order to submit expenses to the Crime Victim's Fund, the victim does have to report the incident to law enforcement.

7. **Question:** Why should I report this to the police when it all happened so fast and I cannot remember what the assailant looked like?

Answer: Any and all information given can provide valuable clues and help the police identify possible patterns of high-risk areas of town. Police are highly trained in interview techniques, and you may be surprised at how much information you may be able to recall. With this information, police can question suspects about any other reports if they apprehend someone.

8. **Question:** What good does it do to report this to the police if I would prefer that the incident not be prosecuted and go to court?

Answer: Reporting provides needed information and helps in identification. In addition, it may help in the identification and prosecution of another case. It also alerts other women in the community that sexual assault is happening in our community so that they can take precautions.

9. **Question:** How often are women sexually assaulted by someone they know?

Answer: It is estimated that 75 to 85 percent of victims knew the assailant in some way. Many times, it is someone that the victim knew and trusted.

10. **Question:** Is it really rape if you went to the assailant's apartment willingly, such as in a dating situation?

Answer: Yes. Sexual assault is any act not voluntarily consented to by each party. Accepting a date or leaving a bar with a man you just met or inviting your date in for a drink does NOT imply consent. You have the right to say no and have it respected regardless of the circumstances. Minnesota also recognizes rape between married couples. No means NO. If you were too afraid to resist or if you said "no" and the assailant continued to forcibly touch you, this constitutes criminal sexual conduct.

11. **Question:** I have heard about the morning-after-pill. What is it? How does it work? Can I have it prescribed for me?

Answer: Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECP's) are a high dose of birth control hormones. They should be taken as soon as possible after unprotected intercourse, preferably within 72 hours, but in some cases ECP's may be effective for up to 120 hours. Most commonly ECP's prevent the ovaries from releasing an egg. If an egg has already been released, emergency contraception may prevent fertilization of an egg by a sperm. Also, although not likely, it is possible that it may prevent a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus. Emergency contraception is not abortion. Once a fertilized egg has implanted itself to the uterus, pregnancy is established and ECP's are ineffective. If used correctly, ECP's are about 69-85% effective in preventing pregnancy. For more information about ECP's call the Emergency Contraception Hotline at 1-888-NOT-2-LATE or to get ECP's contact your local physician or Planned Parenthood, 1411 W. St. Germain Street Suite 106, St. Cloud, MN, 320-252-9504 or 1-800-252-9504.

12. **Question:** I am worried about a possible pregnancy from the rape. What resources are there to help me decide what to do?

Answer:

Pregnancy testing:

Planned Parenthood-1411 W. St. Germain Street Suite 106 St. Cloud, MN 56301
320-252-9504 or 1-800-252-9504
Birthline- (free)
253-4848 or 1-800-786-0200

Supportive Services and Counseling Services:

Lutheran Social Services: Adoption and Pregnancy Counseling Services- 22 Wilson Ave. NE
Ste 110, PO Box 6069 St. Cloud, MN 56302
320-251-7700
Catholic Charities-
252-1280 or 1-888-950-2656

Pro-life services.

Free pregnancy testing:

Birthright-Monticello, MN
763-295-2232 or 1-800-550-4900

Free pregnancy testing, STD testing:

Pregnancy Resource Center-3400 1st St. N Suite 302 St. Cloud, MN 56303
320-253-1962 or 1-800-450-1962

13. **Question:** What if the attacker continues to harass me?

Answer: Call the Law Enforcement Center immediately. There is a special law relating to annoying and obscene telephone calls. Depending on the circumstances, an order for protection, a restraining order or a harassment order may be available. The clerk of court can help you fill out papers for an order for protection or a harassment order. You will need to consult with a private attorney in order to seek a restraining order. If the assailant has been charged and released in his or her own personal recognizance, he or she can be ordered back to jail. If he or she threatens you or further harms you, he or she can also be charged with making terroristic threats or physical assault.

14. **Question:** If I was sexually assaulted in a different county from the one where I live, and I choose to report it to the police, where do I go?

Answer: Go to the police department in the county in which the assault occurred.

15. **Question:** If I do report, will my name be printed in the newspaper?

Answer: The police do not release the name or address of the victim while the case is under investigation if the police are investigating the incident as a sexual assault. Once the assailant is charged and the case goes to trial, all records are classified as public data, and the newspaper does have access to the victim's name and address. However, in our community, there is a standing agreement that the newspaper will not use the victim's name when reporting criminal sexual assault investigations and prosecution. These same protections are not given to the victims who are pursuing civil action unless the case has already been tried in the criminal courts and the assailant was found guilty.