What You Need to Know About A Sexual Assault Nurse Exam

CMSAC
Central Minnesota Sexual Assault Center
Serving Stearns, Benton, Sherburne, and Wright Counties
15 Riverside Drive NE
St. Cloud, MN 56304
Email: cmsac@cmsac.org
Website: www.cmsac.org
320-251-4357
1-800-237-5090
Fax: 320-251-4670
Terms & What They Mean

- **Offender—Perpetrator**: A person who sexually assaults other people.
- **Pelvic Exam**: A part of the SANE Exam where the SANE Nurse looks on the inside of your private parts (vulva, vagina, uterus, and cervix), using a plastic speculum, for any injury or possible evidence.
- **Criminal Justice Investigation**: The process where police can take statements/reports about the sexual assault, collect evidence, (including a sexual assault evidence collection kit), to build a case against the offender/perpetrator.
- **Lab Technician**: Lab technicians take blood and urine samples to do tests for evidence in the sexual assault evidence collection kit.
- **Tetanus**: An infection in the body.
- **Over the Counter Medications**: Medications that you do not need a doctor’s prescription for.
- **Anoscope Procedure**: An exam using a small instrument called an anoscope (also called an anal speculum). This is inserted a few inches into the anus in order to check for possible injuries from a sexual assault.
- **Anus**: The opening at the end of the internal digestive system; (sometimes referred to as the “bum”, “butt”, or “butthole”).
- **Trichomoniasis**: A kind of sexually transmitted infection.
- **Chlamydia**: A kind of sexually transmitted infection.
- **Gonorrhea**: A kind of sexually transmitted infection.
- **Hepatitis B**: A disease causing inflammation of the liver.
- **Penis**: Part of male sex organs system.
• **Sexually Transmitted Disease**: Diseases that you can get by being exposed to a person who has the disease. Most often this happens during sexual contact and can also happen during a sexual assault.

• **Prophylaxis**: A certain medication or treatment used to prevent something from happening.

• **Vagina**: The passage leading from the uterus to the vulva in females. A vagina is a part of the female reproductive system and sex organs.

• **Penetration**: Inserting fingers, objects, or a penis into a vagina or anus.

• **Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit**: A sexual assault evidence collection kit is a way to gather and store physical evidence following a sexual assault, (if you decide to have evidence collected). This evidence can be used to build a case against the person who sexually assaulted you.

• **Uterus**: Part of the female reproductive system.
Who We Are

Central MN Sexual Assault Center (CMSAC) is a 24-hour crisis intervention agency providing direct services to all people affected by any form of sexual violence. The Center’s purpose is to offer non-judgmental, confidential, free, trauma-informed, victim-centered direct services to victims of sexual assault, their partners, families, co-workers, and friends.

Central MN Sexual Assault Center
15 Riverside Drive NE Saint Cloud, MN 56304
Phone: 320.251.4357(HELP) or 1.800.237.5090
Email: cmsac@cmsac.org
Web: www.cmsac.org

Saint Cloud Hospital Contact Information
1406 6th Ave N, St Cloud, MN 56303
Phone: (320) 251-2700
Web: www.centracare.com
CMSAC works with the St. Cloud Hospital to provide SANE services. Both CMSAC and St. Cloud Hospital operate and provide services in their own rights as separate entities outside of the SANE program. During a SANE Exam there are a team of professionals there to help you.

**SANE Nurse:** Nurse who does the SANE Exam and evidence collection.

**Advocate:** Gives emotional support during the SANE Exam and helps to answer your questions about reporting and resource options.

**Law Enforcement—Police:** Can be called to the hospital to take your report about the sexual assault (if you choose to report).

**Primary Nurse:** A primary nurse takes care of you until a SANE Nurse arrives. A nurse from the emergency trauma center or emergency room who will ask you about emergency needs like:

- injuries like cuts, bruises, etc.
- any cultural/language barriers & needed resources
- consent for the SANE Nurse
- needed medications
- helps decide if you could have a SANE Exam done to collect evidence

See “What You Need to Know About Reporting” for more information about reporting options and how your decision affects your evidence kit storage.
What is an Advocate and what does an Advocate do?

A CMSAC Advocate can talk to you privately about what options you have when you are at the hospital because of a sexual assault.

An advocate can help you:

- Decide if you want to have evidence collected
- Talk about the sexual assault that happened
- Decide if you would like to report the sexual assault to police
- Talk about your feelings about the assault
- Feel safe and comfortable by getting you food, water, and blankets during the exam
- Understand how to report to law enforcement and what may happen after you report
- Talk to the police in ways that feel comfortable for you
- By giving you papers about sexual violence, healing, feelings, and more.
- Safety plan if you do not feel safe in your life
- By giving you other kinds of information
- By helping you understand your options

You have the right to say “no” to Advocate services from CMSAC.
What is a SANE Exam?

S = sexual    A = assault    N = nurse    E = exam

The SANE Exam is a way to collect evidence that may be on your body from the sexual assault. A SANE Exam is also called an evidence collection exam. Evidence that is sometimes collected is spit (saliva), bodily fluids such as semen, blood, vaginal fluid, or other physical evidence like body hair, dirt, or skin.

The SANE exam is done at a hospital by a specially trained nurse, called a SANE Nurse. A SANE Nurse knows about sexual assault and how to care for someone who has been sexually assaulted. You can still receive additional medical care from your choice of doctor at any time.

The SANE Nurse will use cotton swabs to collect possible evidence from parts of your body including your genitals/private parts or other areas where you may have been touched by the offender. This evidence will be stored in a box which will be your sexual assault evidence kit.
When you agree to have evidence collected through a SANE Exam, it does not mean you have to do every part of the exam.

For example, you may not want to do the pelvic exam part of the SANE Exam.

However, evidence may be lost if you choose not to have the pelvic exam part of the SANE Exam completed. This could mean that evidence that was lost could not be used later to help build a case against the person who sexually assaulted you.
The SANE Exam can take as long as 2-6 hours to complete. To help you feel as comfortable as possible, you can ask for a heated blanket, food, or drink.

It is important to know that if there was sexual contact in your mouth, the SANE Nurse will want to use the cotton swabs to collect possible evidence from your mouth before you eat or drink. Also, the SANE Nurse will want to use cotton swabs to swab your mouth to get your DNA before you eat or drink.

You can ask to have the TV turned on to help make you feel more comfortable or distracted while the SANE Nurse does the swabs on your body.

If you have a support person with you, you can ask them to hold your hand, stand by your head, or have them leave the room (if you do not want them to see the swabbing of your genital area).
The SANE Exam also has questions the SANE nurse will ask you about what happened during the assault. These questions can feel scary and uncomfortable. The reason for these kinds of questions is to make sure the details of what happened during the sexual assault are recorded as clearly as possible.

The answers to the questions can help later if you choose to report the sexual assault to police. The SANE Nurse also asks these questions so she can know how to treat you medically.

Sometimes, photos may be taken of any visible injuries on your body and used to document injuries from the sexual assault. These photos may be used as evidence in a case against the person who sexually assaulted you, (if you choose to report to police).
This is what a swab dryer looks like. It is used to dry cotton swabs used to collect evidence from your body before they are put into evidence kit envelopes for storage.

This is what a sexual assault evidence kit looks like.

The cotton swabs the SANE Nurse uses look like this.
During the SANE Exam, the SANE Nurse will ask to collect a sample of your urine and blood. The SANE Nurse is sometimes helped by a lab technician to collect blood and urine samples. The lab technician will ask your name and birthday, and then will draw blood using a needle. You can ask to hold the advocate’s hand (or your support person’s hand) if needles or having your blood drawn makes you feel nervous.

The SANE Nurse will have these samples sent to the lab to be tested. Part of these tests will show if STIs and pregnancy are already in your body. It is important to note that you will not know any other test results based on these samples while you are at the hospital. Only the pregnancy test result (to determine if emergency contraception could be taken) will be shared with you at that time. The evidence kit is only processed if you choose to make a report to police about the sexual assault.

This is what the cup looks like that holds your urine sample. The SANE Nurse will give you instructions for this part of the SANE Exam. The SANE Nurse will be in the bathroom with you during this part of the SANE Exam.

These are what the blood sample tubes look like.
Many STI/STDs can be treated with antibiotic medicine. You have the option to get this medicine at the hospital. These medications can prevent possible STI/STDs you may have caught during the sexual assault. These STIs can include the following:

- Trichomoniasis
- Chlamydia
- Gonorrhea
- Hepatitis B

Other medications may be given for tetanus, and over-the-counter pain medications may also be given. The SANE Nurse may also provide a nausea/vomiting medication, because taking all of the meds together may make your stomach feel upset.

There is prevention treatment available for HIV/AIDS. However, HIV/AIDS prophylaxis (prevention medication) is expensive and can negatively affect your health. You can ask the SANE Nurse to explain this more. This treatment can cause liver damage and is not recommended in most sexual assault cases. If HIV/AIDS is a concern, an assessment by the SANE Nurse and a Physician Assistant/Physician should be done to talk about risk factors and if you need the medications.
If you are at risk of becoming pregnant, emergency contraception (Plan B) may be given to you by the primary care nurse. Emergency contraception is a medication used to prevent pregnancy. Plan B will not be offered if you are already pregnant. Plan B will not abort an existing pregnancy.
For females, the SANE Nurse may collect swabs from your vagina (private parts) and rectal/anus (bottom/butthole) area if there was sexual contact there during the sexual assault. If there was penetration (fingers, penis, objects put inside your vagina or anus) during the sexual assault, the SANE Nurse may also ask to do a pelvic exam to check the inside of your vagina and uterus for injuries.

A pelvic exam is done by placing a speculum into the vagina to look at the inside of your body for injuries. You will need to be lying down on an exam table with your feet resting in stirrups for this exam. If you need special accommodations to have a pelvic exam done, the SANE Nurse will help you.

![Speculum Image]

This is what a speculum looks like.

It can feel scary to have a pelvic exam done after a sexual assault, but it is important to check for injuries on the inside of your body to keep your body safe. You can say ‘no’ to any part of the exam at any time. If you need a break you can say something like, “Hold on, I need a minute,” “Please wait,” or “Stop.” You can also have a support person there to hold your hand or talk to you during this part of the exam.
For males, the SANE Nurse will perform a visual inspection of the penis, scrotum, and anus. The SANE Nurse will ask you if there was any sexual contact on your penis, scrotum, or anus. The SANE Nurse will swab any area on your genitals with cotton swabs that may have had sexual contact to collect possible evidence.

If there was anal penetration (a penis, fingers, or object was inserted inside the anus) for males or females, a SANE Nurse may decide to have an anoscope procedure done. You can refuse this part of the exam at any time. However, potential evidence could be lost if this part of the exam is not completed.

This is what an anoscope looks like.

An anoscope procedure inserts an anoscope into the anus to check for internal injury. Usually, an anoscope procedure will only be offered if it is believed you have an injury to this part of your body from the assault.
It is important to know that the county where the assault happened pays for the evidence kit collection part of the SANE Exam. Prevention medicine(s) offered at the St. Cloud Hospital during a SANE Exam are included in the SANE Exam services (which are paid for by the county where the sexual assault happened). The hospital is in charge of sending the bill for services to the correct county and not to the victim. If you do get a bill from the hospital for the SANE Exam, call CMSAC and we can help you to get the bill to the right place.

You may be responsible for paying for medical treatment you got at the hospital beyond the SANE Exam services, (such as treatment for injuries, x-rays for broken bones, dental work, etc.) You may also have to pay for after-care for STIs.

If there are other costs to you as a direct result of a sexual assault, you may be able to get help to pay for these through Crime Victim Reparations. A CMSAC Advocate can help you apply for this money. In some cases, emergency funds are also available to help victims pay to replace items taken for evidence or items that were damaged during the sexual assault.
Suggested Timeline (if Applicable) for Follow-Up Care

After a SANE Exam

Be sure to check with your insurance, because you will be responsible for paying for any care you receive after a SANE Exam.

1–2 Weeks: A medical exam is recommended to be completed for further pregnancy testing, STI concerns, a review of treatment at ER, mental health evaluation, and a physical evaluation.

3 Months: Further assessment of STIs, HIV, and Hepatitis B testing, continued mental and physical health assessment.

6 Months: It is recommended that you have your last HIV test and possibly your last treatment for Hepatitis B.
LOCAL RESOURCES

Central Minnesota Sexual Assault Center
15 Riverside Drive. NE
St. Cloud, MN 56304
(320) 251-4357 or 1-800-237-5090
Offers 24-hour crisis intervention, support counseling, legal and law enforcement advocacy, support groups, information and referrals.

Planned Parenthood
451 East St. Germain Street, Suite 100
St. Cloud, MN 56304
(320) 252-9504
Provides high quality reproductive and related health care services including emergency contraception and medical follow-up.

St. Cloud Hospital Emergency Trauma Center
1406 Sixth Avenue North
St. Cloud, MN 56303
(320) 255-5656
1-800-247-0390
Provides 24-hour emergency medical services and evidence exams.
LOCAL RESOURCES

Anna Marie’s Alliance
P.O. Box 367
St. Cloud, MN 56302
(320) 253-6900
TTY (320) 258-3321
Providing temporary safe housing, advocacy, information and referral to women and their children who have been abused, are being abused, or are in fear of abuse.

Safe at Home Program
P.O. Box 17370
St. Paul, MN 55117
(651) 201-1399
safe.athome@state.mn.us
Safe at Home is a statewide address confidentiality program administered by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State.

St. Cloud State University Women’s Center
720 Fourth Avenue South
St. Cloud, MN 56301
(320) 308-4958 or (320) 308-3995
Files campus sexual assault complaints, provides information and referrals, support and counseling, support groups, and advocacy including legal and law enforcement advocacy.
LOCAL RESOURCES

St. Cloud State University LGBT Resource Center
720 4th Avenue South
St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498
(320) 308-0121
The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center at St. Cloud State University is dedicated to providing an inclusive and educational environment for all SCSU students, staff, faculty, alumni, allies, and the community at large.

Student Health Services
If you are a university or college student, your school may have its own health services which provide health care at a lower cost to students. Check your university directory or website.
If you are an SCSU student contact SCSU Health services at (320) 308-3191

Minnesota Crime Victims Reparations Board
(651) 201-7300
1-888-622-8799
www.dps.state.mn.us/ojp/mccvs/financialhelp/reparations.html
Helps crime victims with some of their financial losses.
LOCAL RESOURCES

State of Minnesota Crime Victims Justice Unit
(651) 201-7310
1-800-247-0390
www.dps.state.mn.us/ojp/mccvs/cvju.html

Offers assistance to crime victims who feel their rights have been violated and who feel that they have been treated unfairly by the criminal justice system or by victim assistance programs.