

Important questions you may have regarding your exam

“Can you test for ‘date rape’ drugs?”

- Samples of your urine and blood may be obtained to test for drugs. Blood and urine should be collected as soon as possible after ingestion but may be collected up to 120 hours.

“Will I be given any medicines to prevent becoming pregnant or getting STDs?”

- A pregnancy test will be done during the exam. If the test is negative, you will be offered the option of taking a medication that can help prevent a pregnancy from occurring. You will also be offered antibiotics that may reduce the chance of getting certain sexually transmitted diseases. You will be advised to follow-up with your own health care provider or clinic for repeat testing. Until you are sure about your exposure to any infectious diseases, you should be careful to practice safe sex until you are sure about your exposure to any infectious diseases, you should consider safe sex practices. Doing so will decrease the risk of you exposing someone else to a potential STD.

Who pays for the exam?

If you have evidence collected, the cost of the exam is paid for by Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund. Any medical treatment charges incurred are the responsibility of the patient or the patient's insurance. There are however, additional resources for financial support, which may be applied for through the Victim–Witness program.

Questions?

- Contact St. Mary’s Emergency Department and ask to have the forensic nurse on call paged.
- A forensic nurse is on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Based on the specifics of the event, the forensic nurse will assist you in determining your options.

St. Mary’s Hospital
Emergency Department

804-281-8184

(Emergency Number)

Guide For Sexual Assault Victims



**BON SECOURS RICHMOND
FORENSIC NURSING SERVICES**
Bon Secours Richmond Health System

St. Mary’s Hospital
5801 Bremono Road
Richmond, VA 23226
804-281-8574
(Non-Emergency Number)

What if you're a victim of sexual assault?

- If possible try not to shower, bathe, douche, wash your hands, brush your teeth, use the bathroom, smoke or eat until you have been examined.
- If possible try not to change clothing. If you have changed clothes, do not wash them. Place them in a paper bag. It may be difficult for you to remember to do these things, however to preserve evidence this is very important.

You have options:

- You can file a report with law enforcement and have evidence collected by the forensic nurse within 120 hours.
- You can have evidence collected from the forensic nurse within 120 hours without filing a report with law enforcement, this is called a Blind PERK.
- You can have a medical exam without evidence collection or filing a report with law enforcement.

Things to know about your Emergency Department visit

- Your first contact in the Emergency Department will be with a nurse or admitting clerk. The clerk will obtain basic information such as your name and address; the nurse will ask about your allergies, medications and get vital signs.
- You will then be escorted to a private examination room.
- Next, you will be seen by an Emergency Department provider, who will evaluate you for any injuries.
- The forensic nurse will be contacted.

What is a forensic nurse?

- A forensic nurse is a registered nurse that has specialized training in taking care of patients that have been victims of violence.
- The forensic nurse will discuss your options with you and answer any questions you may have.

Things to know about your forensic exam

If you decide to proceed with evidence collection, the forensic nurse, with your permission, will:

- Explain the evaluation and answer any questions you may have.
- Gather a history about your current health.
- Obtain details of the assault. This helps the nurse gain a better understanding of where to look for potential evidence.
- Complete a physical assessment including the genital area, to look for external or internal injuries caused by the assault. This includes scratches, bruises, abrasions, etc.
- Use of a magnifying instrument, called a colposcope, to help see any injuries or possible evidence.
- During the evaluation you may choose to have a support person at your side.
- An advocate will also be contacted to help provide follow up counseling and safety resources.