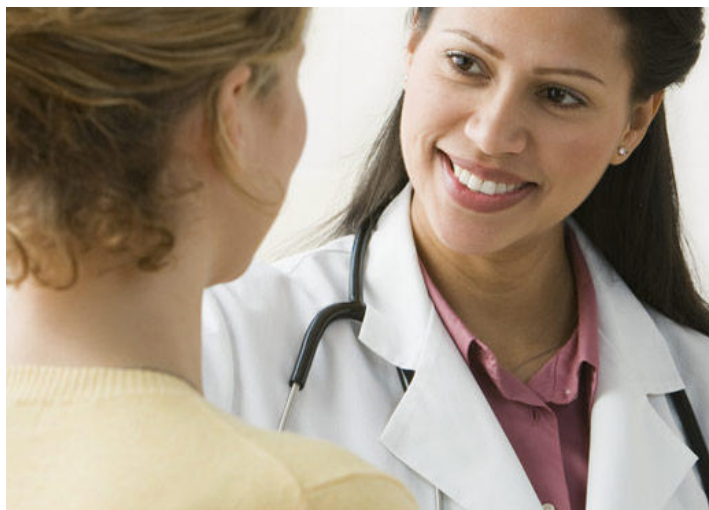


## You will be SAFE here.



### **A Safe Place**

Sexual assault is an extremely serious trauma and an extreme injustice and no one should have to go through the trauma alone.

You are not alone. You're in the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Room at WCA Hospital. The SAFE Room and SAFE program were created to protect and help sexual assault victims like you. A specially trained Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner is on the way. A SAFE provider is a doctor or nurse trained to help sexual assault survivors and collect physical evidence to hold their abuser accountable.

### **Complete Confidentiality**

Everything that happens here is completely confidential. Only you can consent to releasing the results of your forensic exam or any evidence gathered by the SAFE provider. If the assault occurred within the last 72 hours, forensic evidence, including DNA, can be collected.

### **You and the Law**

Whether or not to press charges is up to you. You don't have to make a decision today. Many sexual assault survivors choose to wait and think about whether to press charges after the SAFE provider collects the evidence. You have up to 30 days from the date of your SAFE exam to decide if you want to press charges.

Just because you talk to the police and they fill out a report about what happened, that doesn't mean your attacker will be charged. That decision is up to you. We encourage you to make a police report so there is a record of what occurred that can be used to prosecute your attacker if and when you choose to do so.

If an arrest is made, the name of your attacker will be made public, but your name will not. All area media outlets have policies that prevent them from releasing the name of sexual assault survivors.

## What to do now...

### **You matter, not the circumstances that led to your assault**

If you were drinking at a party but you are underage, that doesn't matter. You won't get in trouble if the police are called because you were drinking or using drugs at the time of the assault.

Rape and sexual assault are more common than most people think. National statistics show one in three women and one in six men will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime. Statistics also show that in 75 percent of cases, the attacker and victim knew each other before the assault occurred.

# You will be SAFE here.

## The SAFE process

Once the SAFE provider arrives, they will ask you a series of questions. Be honest and give them as much detail as you can. The sexual assault forensic exam is designed to protect you and gather evidence. We know this is a difficult time for you, but the exam is necessary to hold your abuser accountable. The following steps will be taken during the examination by the SAFE provider:

- Examine your entire body, including your groin for evidence of trauma such as bumps, abrasions, or cuts, carefully making notes and photographing each.
- Examine your hands for nail clippings and scrapings. Your attacker's hair, blood, or skin can be found on your hands or underneath your fingernails.
- Photograph any bite marks and swab them for saliva, which may contain biological evidence, including DNA.
- Swab any stains found on you because they may contain saliva or semen.
- Collect vaginal, anal, and oral swabs to check for DNA.
- Comb your pubic hair for foreign fibers and hairs.
- Search your clothing for stains and take samples from your clothes. Your clothing will also need to be collected and sent to a crime lab for further analysis. You will be given other clothes to wear home.

Even if there is no sign of trauma, that doesn't mean a sexual assault didn't occur. The SAFE provider will look for signs that sexual intercourse occurred and collect evidence.

## HIV Postexposure Prophylaxis (PEP)

If the assault occurred within the last two to

36 hours, the attending physician will offer treatment with a series of drugs designed to protect you from HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Unless it is known with 100 percent certainty that your attacker is not HIV positive, we recommend you initiate PEP treatment as soon as possible. You will also be tested for HIV exposure and will be asked to return for follow-up testing at one, three and six month intervals.

## After the exam



Rape and sexual assault are devastating physically and emotionally. Many sexual assault survivors, suffering from psychological trauma, feel shame or guilt and believe they are somehow at fault for what happened. You are not at fault. Your attacker is at fault and we're here to help you hold your attacker responsible.

A specially trained mental health therapist, called a victim advocate, will help you begin the healing process. The victim advocate will explain the community resources available to help you. The victim advocate will also help you arrange long-term counseling and follow-up visits.

Remember, you are not alone. The SAFE program was created to help you.