



FAQs: Sexual Assault Medical Exams for Children and Youth

Who should have an acute sexual assault forensic exam?

If the sexual assault occurred within the last 5 days, it is recommended that the child have an acute sexual assault forensic exam. If the child has been in contact with the suspected offender within the last five days, an acute sexual assault forensic exam would also be recommended. These exams are offered at Harborview Hospital and Children's Hospital Emergency Departments.

What happens at an acute sexual assault forensic exam?

Most forensic sexual assault exams are done by a specially trained sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE). The purpose of the exam is to carefully assess for injuries and risk of infection, reassure the parent and child, provide follow up support services and collect evidence.

Who should have a non- acute sexual assault medical exam?

If it has been over 5 days since the sexual assault a non-acute sexual assault medical exam is recommended. The primary purpose of the exam is to make sure the child or youth is safe and healthy. These exams are scheduled at the Harborview Abuse & Trauma Center clinic.

What happens during the non-acute sexual assault exam?

The appointment takes about 90 minutes. The exam of the child's body takes about 10 minutes, and the remaining time is spent providing information and support to the parent and child. The exam is done in a sensitive and gentle manner and at any time the parent or child can refuse all or part of the exam.

Will my child be interviewed at this appointment?

The specialized medical exam does NOT include a forensic interview. The medical provider will have an independent conversation with the child if they are 4 years or older. This is considered a medical interview to learn about the child's concerns.

Are there costs associated with the medical exam?

There are no patient costs related to the exam. Our funding is supported through the crime victim's compensation program.

If you have additional questions please contact our clinic at (206)744-1600 and ask to speak with the medical social worker.