

Facts, Questions and Answers

INFORMATION FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIMS

Some information from the Rape Treatment Center, Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center

S A F E T Y If you are the victim of an assault, go to a hospital emergency department or a clinic that provides medical care for sexual assault victims (Lafene does this during open hours). Even if you think that you do not have any physical injuries, you should still have a medical examination and discuss with a health care provider the risk of exposure to sexually transmitted diseases and the possibility of pregnancy resulting from the sexual assault. If you suspect that you may have been given a rape drug, ask the hospital or clinic where you receive medical care to take a urine sample **immediately**.

CAN I GET A SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE (STD) AS A RESULT OF A SEXUAL ASSAULT? The likelihood of getting an STD as a result of a sexual assault depends upon a number of factors, including the type(s) of sexual contact that occurred, the number of assailants, and whether or not an assailant was infected with an STD at the time of the assault. A number of STDs can be contracted during sexual contact, including hepatitis B, gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes, chlamydia, genital warts, and vaginitis. Immediate and effective treatment options are available for some of these STDs. Most medical care providers offer sexual assault victims two choices for dealing with the risks of STDs. You may choose to reduce the risk of contracting certain STDs by taking medication immediately as a preventive measure. Or you may wish to wait to see if you actually contracted any disease(s) before taking medication. Whichever treatment option you choose, you should be re-examined and tested within a specific time period to be certain that you do not have an STD.

R E P O R T I N G You may decide to report the crime to the police. This establishes a legal record of the crime, whether you are sure you want to participate in the prosecution or not. Reporting can help apprehend serial rapists. Reporting can help you to regain personal power and control in your life. If you decide to report, preserve all physical evidence of the assault. Do not shower, bathe, douche, or brush your teeth. Save all of the clothing you were wearing at the time of the assault. Place each item of clothing in a separate paper bag. Do not use plastic bags. Do not disturb anything in the area where the assault occurred. During a medical examination, the doctor or nurse can look for and collect physical evidence of a sexual assault, such as sperm samples and stains on your body or clothing. This evidence may be present immediately after the assault but will deteriorate as time passes.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I CALL THE POLICE? In most cities, the police department will send one or two uniformed officers in a patrol car to take a report, obtain various kinds of evidence, and assist you in getting the services you need. In many police departments, the officers have had special training in how to help sexual assault victims. The police ask specific questions because it is important to document the crime fully and to identify all the forms of abuse you suffered. An advocate or a friend can accompany you to provide emotional support during the interview.

E F F E C T S The effects of sexual assault vary depending on an individual's coping abilities and environmental situation. Many victims pass back and forth through stages of Shock and Numbness, Denial, Anger, Bargaining, and Depression before coming to Acceptance and Assimilation. Rape victims frequently feel guilt and self-blame; they may feel concern for or fear of the rapist; they may become overcome with feelings of shame or stupidity. Victims often show one of two reactional styles: Expressed (crying, shaking, smiling, tenseness, restlessness) or Controlled (calm, subdued, masked emotions). Severe effects of sexual assault may last for days, weeks, months, or years. **It is important to emphasize that these reactions are typical, that individuals react and heal in varied ways, and that finding a counselor, advocate, or other helper can greatly assist in the recovery process.**

Where can I get help?

Sexual Assault Advocate—Information—Referral: Kansas State University Women's Center, 206 Holton Hall, 532-6444

Medical Assistance—Rape Kit: Lafene Health Center Women's Clinic, 532-6554; Mercy ER, 1823 College Ave., 776-3322

Mental Health—Well-Being—Counseling: KSU Counseling Services, 532-6927, web site: <http://www.ksu.edu/counseling>

Academic: Office of Student Life, 532-6432

KSU Police: 532-6412; Riley County Police: 537-2112

Domestic Violence and Emergency Shelter: The Crisis Center, Inc. 1-800-727-2785 (In Manhattan: 539-2785)

Call 911 for immediate emergency assistance.