* Evidence/samples will be collected from multiple locations on your body. These may include your mouth, genitals, hair and fingernails.
* You may be given a pelvic or anal examination to assess and treat injuries and collect evidence.
* Blood and urine samples may also be taken
* If you have been under the influence, you have the right to request a blood alcohol content/drug test. This may help to determine if you were unable to give consent prior to the assault due to alcohol or drug level of intoxication.

How much does a Forensic Exam cost?

Legally in the state of Missouri, you cannot be charged for the cost of a forensic exam. You can, however, be charged for other medical care you receive at the hospital other than the forensic exam. This might include a physical exam by a doctor, pregnancy testing, prescriptions, or other services. If you report the crime to police, you may be eligible for Crime Victims’ Compensation, which could reimburse you for any related expenses to the sexual assault.

Is there anything I should (or shouldn’t do) before a forensic exam?

If you have just been sexually assaulted, it is helpful for you to take measures to ensure that evidence of the crime is preserved. This way, evidence can be collected correctly during the sexual assault exam in case you decide to report the assault. You may also want to bring extra clothes to change into after the exam because if you report that there may be biological evidence on the clothing you are wearing they may want to keep it as evidence.

Before the exam, try *NOT* to:

* Shower
* Drink
* Eat
* Change clothes
* Use the bathroom
* Brush your teeth
* Even if you have done any or all of these things you still can have a SAFE exam because there may still be evidence which can be collected.

What happens after the Forensic Exam?

The evidence collected form your exam, if you choose to make a formal report with law enforcement the evidence will be coded by number and stored at a local law enforcement agency. Your name will not be marked in anyway on the evidence, and the hospital will be the only agency able to connect your name to the evidence. If you choose to proceed with the criminal reporting process, you will sign a release form to allow the hospital to release your personal identification information pertaining to your exam. You may be asked if you would like to report the crime to law enforcement. At this point, you will have the option to proceed directly to a law enforcement agency to begin this process.

Making a Report

There are many reasons you may choose to report the crime to a law enforcement agency. You may feel empowered by telling what has happened to you. This can help you regain a sense of control, and it can be satisfying to seek justice for person(s) who committed the harm against you. Reporting the crime may also prevent your attacker from harming others. Reporting the crime, however, does not guarantee justice for the crime that was committed. Whether or not a case moves forward to a criminal hearing is dependent on a variety of factors, and attackers may or may not receive consequences for their actions.

The Legal System

* Criminal Law-After you have reported the crime to law enforcement, the police may arrest your attacker and/or conduct an investigation. After an investigation takes place, a report is submitted to the county prosecutor’s office. The prosecuting attorney is the only person that decides whether or not to charge a person with a particular crime (or multiple crimes).
* Civil Law-In addition to the criminal justice system, survivors of sexual offenses may pursue civil court remedies. These remedies may include filing a personal injury lawsuit against your attacker, pursing employment rights actions, and/or seeking an Order of Protection in cases of stalking or sexual assault committed by an intimate partner or family or household member. Civil process may occur separate from or simultaneously during criminal law processes.

Statute of Limitations

Missouri has statutes of limitations that set the maximum amount of time a prosecuting attorney can wait before filing a criminal case against an offender. In general, if a case is not brought within the time limits, the offender cannot be tried for the offense. Missouri, however, has no time limit for the filing of criminal charges against an offender for such crimes as forcible reape, forcible sodomy and attempted forcible sodomy. For other felony sexual offenses, including sexual assault, the statute of limitations is

three years. That statute of limitation for a misdemeanor offense is one year. For the most up to date information regarding Missouri sexual offenses, legal definitions and specific penalties, see Missouri’s Revised Statutes at moga.mo.gov/STATUTES/C566.htm.

Orders of Protection

A survivor of sexual violence may consider filing a petition for an Order of Protection. An Order of Protection is a court order that is designed to stop violent and harassing behavior and to protect you and your family from an abuser or attacker. While an order of protection is primarily designed to protect victims of domestic violence (abuse by a family or household member), victims of sexual assault can sometimes qualify. An Order of Protection can be granted if you have been stalked by your attacker, or your attacker is a family or household member. An Order of Protection can direct your attacker to refrain from any further acts of abuse, sexual assault or harassment, as well as other appropriate remedies, restrictions or requirements ordered by the judge.



For survivors of sexual assault and domestic abuse

Call the 24-hour confidential hotline

660-827-5555 or toll free at 1-800-846-7597

**SEXUAL ASSAULT**

**IS A CRIME**

***WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW…***

What is a Forensic Exam?

A forensic exam is a medical examination specifically for individuals that have experienced sexual assault. In addition to the general care you receive at the emergency room (physical exam, treatment for injuries and testing for sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy), you can opt to receive a forensic exam that will check your body for evidence relating to the sexual assault. Physical evidence, such as hair, semen, saliva, may be collected during this exam and photographs may be taken of injuries and stored for possible future use in court to prosecute the person(s) who committed the sexual assault. You can receive the forensic exam at no charge to you in the state of Missouri.

What to expect during the Forensic Exam?

* A SANE will obtain your consent before proceeding with the examination.
* If at any time you wish to stop or take a break, just ask. You may also refuse any portion of the exam. You have the right to ask people (other than medical personnel) to leave the room at any time.
* You will be asked a variety of questions about your medical history, and current health, similar to those you would be asked as if you were there for any type of medical visit.
* You will be asked variety of questions about the assault
* You will be asked to disrobe and your clothes may be taken as evidence. Other clothes will be made available to you after the exam or you may bring your own change of clothes with you to the hospital. You may also call or ask a friend or loved one to bring extra clothes to the hospital.
* The nurse examiner will scan your body for wounds bruises, cuts, etc., and treat them appropriately.