

Health Factsheet
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Sexual Assault

What is it?

Sexual assault as any type of sexual behaviour that makes someone feel uncomfortable, frightened, intimidated or threatened. Rape is an act of violence that uses sex as the weapon.

Sadly, one in five women in Australia will experience sexual assault at some time in their life. But sexual assault is never the fault of the victim. Nor is the victim's actions, clothing or lifestyle ever an acceptable excuse for the assault.

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual assault, your GP can help.

What will my GP do now?

Your GP's priority is your health and wellbeing. Your GP will talk to you about the assault and help you understand your options.

You can choose to inform the police or a sexual assault service – but, you don't have to. Your GP may recommend you undergo forensic testing at a hospital if the assault happened in the past five days. Forensic testing can support your account of the assault and identify the people involved.

Your GP may put you in touch with a crisis support worker from a local sexual assault service who can help you decide if you want to involve the police.

Your GP will also:

- Give you a referral for a counsellor
- Complete a medical exam and check for any injuries if you are comfortable with this
- Talk to you about the emergency contraception pill
- Keep a record of what you have said about the assault
- Help you access ongoing medical care

Your GP will talk to you about whether you need STI or HIV prophylaxis. These are medications that can help prevent some sexually transmitted infections if taken within the first 72 hours.

What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP will see you again in the next few days and weeks to check your health and discuss your options. Your GP will also refer you to a counsellor for ongoing support.

Your GP can also help you decide on your next steps, including legal advice and whether you want to speak to a sexual assault service or the police.

What can I do?

It's not easy to talk about sexual assault, but your GP's office is a safe, private space. Remember, it is not your fault that this has happened. Sexual assault is a crime. Try and be open and honest with your GP about what happened. You will not be judged for talking about your assault. Consider whether you want to involve the police or a local sexual assault service. Going to a sexual assault service does not always mean you have to involve the police. Local services can support you with ongoing counselling and resources to help you get through this difficult time.

If you think someone gave you drugs – legal or illegal – tell your GP. A blood test and urine sample need to be taken as soon as possible.

Sexual Assault



What questions should I ask my doctor?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>What happens now?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Do I need to go to a sexual assault service?</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>What if I don't want to involve the police?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Should I get legal advice?</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Do I need to go to hospital?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Who do I call if it happens again?</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Do I need forensic testing?</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Who can I call if I don't feel safe?</i> |

What supports are available?

SWSLHD Sexual Assault Forensic Medical Service

Provides a forensic service for victims of recent sexual assault (children and adult). Based in Liverpool Hospital. Phone **8738 3000**.

NSW Police Service

For people who want to report their assault to the or to Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers.

SWSLHD Sexual Assault Service

Support for sexual assault victims and their families. Phone **8738 4844** or **8738 3000** (after hours).

Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia

24 hours, 7 days telephone and online crisis counselling for people who have experienced or are at risk of sexual assault. Phone counselling services include:

- NSW Rape Crisis: **1800 424 017**
- 1800Respect: **1800 737 732**
- Sexual Assault Counselling Australia: **1800 211 028**

Where can I learn more?

- **ACT Health Forensic and Medical Sexual Assault Care:** health.act.gov.au
- **NSW Rape Crisis - reporting to police:** nswrapecrisis.com.au
- **NSW Rape Crisis / Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia - common impacts of sexual assault:** rape-dvservices.org.au
- **Reach Out - What is Sexual Assault?** au.reachout.com
- **Reach Out - 5 things you need to know about sexual consent:** au.reachout.com

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory is an initiative of South Western Sydney PHN

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