

Adult Sexual Assault - 7 Day Window Considerations

(For children – you must follow Child Protection Protocols)

Scottish Ambulance Service: Follow guidance in 'all cases' section where possible. Treat any immediate life threatening (ILT) presentations with consideration to preserving physical/traceable evidence. If no ILT presentations, limit physical interventions to only 'absolutely necessary' explaining rationale to the person. Record accurately all observations and crew actions and interventions. Ensure any clothing removed from the person during the course of treatment is recorded. Ensure accurate electronic Patient Report Form completion. Follow Algorithm available on JRCALC plus.

All Cases

Providing an accessible, non-stigmatising response will potentially have a stabilising influence on the subsequent, longer-term impact of rape or sexual assault.

If someone presents to your service after a recent rape or sexual assault, you should:

- Treat any immediate physical or medical conditions requiring attention or make necessary arrangements for this.
- Never 'interrogate' the person about the incident. If they seem distressed, ask if they would prefer you to ask questions to which they only need to give a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Allow the person to talk as little or as much as they wish, noting down carefully what they say, keeping what you note down as exact as possible.
- Check whether they want to report the assault to the police even if historical.
- Always provide signposting to third sector organisations for help and support.
- Refer the person to sexual health and/or mental health services.
- Always consider vulnerability and whether the person is an adult who is 'unable to safeguard their own interests though disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, and who [is] at risk of harm or self-harm, including neglect'
- Discuss safety concerns for the person and any children especially if the perpetrator is known to them. If you know/suspect a child is at risk use appropriate Child Protection procedures.

More than 7 days and declines police reporting

Follow guidance in 'all cases section'

Any disclosure of sexual violence should be recorded. It may help in any future legal proceedings, if they decide to report to the police. This includes:

- what the person says occurred,
- the nature of the consultation and significance of the experience of sexual assault with regard to this.

7 days or less and declines police report

Follow guidance in 'all cases section'

Address any immediate clinical concerns.

- Do not attempt any clinically unnecessary pelvic examination. The person may later wish to report the matter to the police, so it is important that forensic evidence is available if required later since this may be retrievable for up to **seven** days.
- Evaluate the risk of pregnancy either to prescribe emergency contraception or to ensure appropriate management.
- Assess the wish or need for referral for further assessment and screening, particularly for sexually transmitted infections and counselling.
- Depending on the setting, consider admission to a 'haven' to help recovery.

7 days or less and agrees to police reporting

Follow guidance in 'all cases section'

Treat any immediate physical or medical conditions requiring attention or make necessary arrangements for this.

- Contact the police on 101.
- Do not examine the person if not required for other clinical reasons.
- If the police are involved, an examination by a forensic specialist will be arranged if appropriate.
- Ensure that no items of clothing are discarded. Explain that it is important that they do not wash. Try to make them as comfortable as possible while waiting for the police and forensic examination.
- If the assault may have been 'drug assisted' it is important that the forensic examination is arranged as soon as possible as traces of the drugs can leave the system very quickly, along with other forensic evidence. This varies depending on the drug. The police may want to take blood, urine and hair samples and carry out a forensic examination specific to rape or sexual assault.
- If the assault includes the oral cavity, advise the person not to eat, drink fluids, smoke, chew gum, brush teeth or take medication.
- If they need to use the toilet, keep any toilet tissue/sanitary products in a clear plastic bag and inform police.

Forensic swabs should only be taken by a trained Forensic Examiner

If you require further advice about managing and supporting a person who has been sexually assaulted in the past 7 days, please contact your Health Board Nominated Lead – details available from the CMO Taskforce website – <https://www.gov.scot/groups/taskforce-to-improve-services-for-rape-and-sexual-assault-victims/>.

Sexual Health considerations

- Consider need for STI and BBV screening
- Consider hepatitis B vaccination
- Consider HIV prophylaxis (within 72 hours of assault)

Contact your local board sexual health service

Helplines & Contacts

Rape Crisis Scotland (all genders age 13+)
Between 6pm and midnight on 08088 01 03 02
Email: support@rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

Scottish Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline: 0800 027 1234

Breathing Space
0800 83 85 87

Survivors UK (Male Rape and Sexual Abuse)
02035983898
Email: help@survivorsuk.org

Useful Website links:

What Health Workers Need to Know About Gender Based Violence
<http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/2099/gbv-domestic-abuse-march2019.pdf>
British Association of Sexual Health and HIV: <https://www.bashh.org/guidelines>
Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Health: <https://www.fsrh.org/standards-and-guidance/current-clinical-guidance/>