



Information for survivors of a recent sexual assault

Following a sexual assault you may have many issues to consider. It is important to consider the possibilities of injury, pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections, and whether or not to report the assault to the police. The amount of support and help you receive at this time can help you to overcome the initial shock and disruption to your life.

Your feelings

Following a sexual assault you may be in shock, which can display itself in many different ways: you may feel numb, in disbelief, be shaking, laughing hysterically or being physically sick. You might continue with your daily routine as usual. Remember, everyone reacts and feels differently. Your feelings may keep changing over time, and whatever you are feeling is a 'normal' response to what has happened. You may feel it was your fault. **It wasn't.** What happened to you should not have happened. It is important to try to look after yourself. Try to be patient and kind to yourself. Remember you are not responsible for anyone else's feelings.

Physical injuries

If you have any physical injuries you should consider getting them treated by your doctor or local Accident and Emergency Department. You may need medical attention, especially if you are bleeding or in pain. If you feel worried or nervous it may help to take a friend for support. Some women find it helpful to have all their questions written down. Remember, no-one has the right to make you go through anything you don't feel you are able to, and you don't have to tell the doctor about the assault if you don't want to.

Pregnancy

If there is a possibility of pregnancy you may want to take the morning after pill (effective for up to 72 hours after) or have a coil fitted (effective for up to 5 days after). If this course of action is right for you, go to your Family Planning Clinic or GP. You may want to take a pregnancy test. You can ask your GP or the Family Planning Clinic (0131 343 6243) to do a pregnancy test, or you can buy a home pregnancy-testing kit for around £6, which is accurate 2-3 weeks following conception. They are available from any chemist, have clear instructions, and are reliable.

If you know that you are pregnant, you may want to talk to someone about what to do next. If you are comfortable talking to your GP s/he will go through the options with you, or you may prefer to talk to an EWRASAC worker first. It is important that you know about all the options available and make the right decision for yourself. You might decide you want an abortion or you might decide that you want to continue with the pregnancy. It's your life, and nobody should try to pressure you into any decision. Access the support you need to make the decision that feels right for you.

Sexually transmitted infections

If you are worried that you may have caught a sexually transmitted infection (STI) it is a good idea to be tested. If you do have an STI, treatment can prevent you from becoming more seriously ill later on. Some infections don't display symptoms right away; only tests show them up. You can go to a specialist clinic (GUM clinic, Lauriston Buildings, Lauriston Place) to have tests done. Their telephone number is 0131 536 2104. You can also speak to one of their health advisers directly on 0131 536 2108. The GUM clinic provides confidential testing and women only sessions. They run a clinic once a week on a Wednesday afternoon for people who have been raped or sexually assaulted – but you can go on any clinic day. It doesn't matter whether the assault happened recently or in the past.

Everything that happens at the GUM clinic will be confidential, and you do not have to tell them that you have been assaulted. You or your doctor can make an appointment and you don't have to give your own name. You can take a friend with you for support.

Reporting a sexual assault to the police

It is your decision whether you want to report what has happened to you to the police or not. You can report to your local police station, or you can phone the Amethyst Team (formerly known as the Family Protection Unit) based at the Gyle on 0131 316 6600. You can arrange to speak to an officer first and then decide if you want to report a crime. You can ask to speak to a female officer.

If you are considering reporting a rape or sexual assault which has just happened the more evidence you preserve the greater the chance of conviction:

- Ring the police as soon as you are able to – if you are in any danger ring 999
- Try not shower or bathe – even though this may be your first instinct
- Try not to clean your teeth
- If possible ring someone you trust, and see if they can be with you
- Do not change your clothes. If you do, put everything you were wearing into a plastic bag and keep it somewhere safe
- Avoid eating or drinking, especially alcohol
- Don't comb your hair
- Try to avoid going to the toilet until you have been examined
- If the rapist used a condom don't get rid of it

You can still report at a later time if you choose to and have not done any of the above.

If you report a sexual assault to the police, they will take a brief statement and notify CID. A CID Detective Sergeant will take charge of the investigation. All interviews with you should be by a police officer from the Amethyst Team, who is specially trained to deal with sexual assault cases. They will take a detailed statement, which will be passed on to CID, and CID will interview the accused. They may also arrange for a forensic examination in a specialist unit which is based at the Gyle. If you report an assault and the police think that there is unlikely to be any forensic evidence, you may not need to go for a forensic examination. If you would like to talk this through with someone please contact EWRASAC on 0131 556 9437.

- **If you would like further information on reporting to the police and going to court – please contact us for our information booklet on 0131 556 9437.**

Useful contact numbers

Amethyst Team (formerly the Family Protection Unit)	0131 316 6600
Caledonia Youth Clinic	0131 229 3596
Edinburgh Crisis Centre	0808 801 0414
EWRASAC	0131 556 9437
Family Planning Association	0131 343 6243
GUM Clinic	0131 536 2104
Lothian and Borders Police	0131 311 31 31
Rape and Abuse Line	0808 800 0123
Samaritans	0131 221 9999

To view all our leaflets please visit www.rapecrisisScotland.org.uk. If you would like copies please contact us and we will send them out to you in an unmarked envelope:

c/o EWRASAC, PO Box 120 Brunswick Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5WX
Helpline: 0131 556 9437, Business: 0131 557 6737
Email: support@ewrasac.org.uk / info@ewrasac.org.uk