

Post-Assault Care and Patient Discharge

After the patient has had the health care and evidentiary exam, and has received all necessary treatment, she should be offered the opportunity to shower and brush her teeth. Necessary items for showering, oral hygiene, and clothing are often provided by hospital and community volunteer organizations or the local Rape Crisis Center. She may also need information and specific instructions on any or all of the following:

- Cleaning and treating abrasions/lacerations,
- Tetanus vaccination,
- HIV care and treatment,
- Hepatitis B vaccination, and,
- Counseling.

Prior to discharge, the patient must be provided written documentation of diagnostic testing, treatment, and follow-up health care recommendations, including information on available community resources that might be needed. The patient should be provided with necessary follow-up appointments, prescriptions and referrals.

The local Rape Crisis Center can assist the patient with access to much of the physical and psychological post-assault care. A list of Rape Crisis Centers is included in Appendix M.

The examiner must inform the patient of the institution's policy regarding the release or disposal of sexual offense evidence. The patient should receive the name and phone number of a staff person who can assist the patient as necessary. Any further contact with the patient must be carried out in a discreet manner. The name and number of a contact person (associated with the health care provider) is included on the patient information form (see Appendix Q).

Arrangements must be made to ensure that no patient has to leave the examination site in a patient gown.

The hospital must provide each patient with an appropriate and safe discharge, including: medical transfer, as necessary, necessary and appropriate follow-up care/referrals, hospital contact person to assist with release or disposal of sexual offense evidence, suitable attire, transportation or appropriate arrangement, etc., as necessary to meet patient needs.

To ensure that all steps have been taken, a sample checklist has been provided for your use (see Appendix R).