

# Recent sexual assault – What now?

## If you need immediate help:

- If you are in immediate danger or need urgent medical assistance, call 000
- Sexual Assault Crisis Line (after hours, weekends and public holidays): 1800 577 011
- During business hours: contact your local Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)
- Not in Victoria: call 1800 RESPECT – 1800 737 732

All services listed are free, confidential and voluntary.

## Support after a recent sexual assault

### Things to remember:

- You do not have to go through this alone
- You do not have to have the answers right now
- You can access support to help you make decisions about what happens next

If you have experienced a recent sexual assault within the last 2 weeks, you can access crisis support at a specialist sexual assault service. You can access this support even if you do not report to police or pursue any medical or legal action.

When you call SACL or your local CASA, a counsellor/advocate can:

- Listen to you and provide you with emotional support
- Talk to you about how you are feeling
- Explain the available medical and legal options
- Support you to make decisions about what to do next

### Medical care

You may choose to access medical support after a sexual assault. This is optional and does not require a police report. Medical care after sexual assault is not the same as accessing a forensic medical examination.

Medical care may include:

- Assessment and treatment of injuries
- Emergency contraception
- Assessment for HIV or hepatitis B prevention
- Follow-up testing for sexually transmitted infections
- Assessment for non-fatal neck compression or strangulation (also known as sexual choking)

### Reporting to police

Sexual assault is a crime. Choosing whether to report to police is your decision. You can:

- Report immediately
- Report at a later time
- Choose not to report at all

In Victoria, sexual offences are generally investigated by SOCIT – the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team. SACL or CASA can support you to find the right SOCIT and some CASAs can support you when you speak to SOCIT.

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Support from a CASA is always available even if you do not involve police. You can discuss your options with a counsellor/advocate. People have many valid reasons for choosing not to report to police. You can still access support from your local CASA.

## Forensic Medical Exams

If you choose to report to SOCIT, they may discuss the possibility of having forensic evidence collected. If you are offered a forensic medical exam, you can choose to decline.

There are some instances where a forensic medical exam is not required or may not be available and you can speak to SOCIT for further information about this.

If you have a forensic medical exam, it is performed by a specialist forensic doctor or nurse. It will include a general medical assessment and they may speak to you about any other medical attention you might require. You can have a support person or counsellor/advocate present with you for the exam.

## Considering forensic evidence

If you are thinking about reporting to police and having a forensic medical examination, you might want to avoid showering, brushing your teeth or changing your clothes. Even if you have done those things, it won't impact your ability to report to the police.

There are very sensitive timelines around collecting forensic evidence after a sexual assault, generally within 72 hours. The decision to offer you a forensic medical exam is made between SOCIT and the forensic doctor or nurse, based on the likelihood of collecting evidence. You can always decline the offer.

## Where to get help

If you are in Victoria and have experienced sexual assault within the last two weeks, you can access immediate crisis support via the options below:

### **During business hours**

Contact your local Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)

Find your nearest service at: <https://peak.sasvic.org.au/servicemap> and enter your postcode or suburb

### **After hours, weekends and public holidays**

Call the Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL) on 1800 577 011

*If you are not in Victoria*

Call 1800 RESPECT or 1800 737 732

Or find a local support service at: <https://www.nasasv.org.au/support-directory>