

What to do if you are sexually assaulted:

Get to a safe place.

Remember the assault is not your fault.

Do Not Shower, drink anything, brush your teeth, wash, douche, change clothes, or urinate.

Go to the nearest Trauma Center/Hospital as soon as possible. Call 911 if needed to get there.

At the hospital, they will provide medical treatment for any injuries or pain that you have, plus they can collect evidence of the assault and treat you for infections or unwanted pregnancy that could result from the assault. The evidence collection kit is sealed and submitted to the police crime lab. Results are only used in case of prosecution. No matter what your decision about reporting to the police, a rape kit is highly recommended.

Get Support.

You may want to call a friend or someone you trust to accompany you to the hospital, or just have someone to talk with about what happened. You may not want to talk about it, but rather just have someone around. You may call a rape crisis center to talk with a counselor/advocate.

Remember that there are no wrong answers if you do what you feel is right for you. Just don't take the law into your own hands.

Immediate attention provides the best medical protection and legal evidence. You have many legal options, so making a police report as soon as possible may be important to protect your rights. Making a police report does not obligate you to follow the entire process through, but it is an important first step. It is *your choice* to talk to the police and pursue legal action. The hospital is required to call the police and to provide medical attention without charging you for treatment immediately after a sexual assault. The hospitals in Kane County all call their local rape crisis center to request an advocate for you as well. You can decide if you would like the assistance of any of these people.

If You Think That Your Child Has Been Abused:

- Believe the child. Children rarely lie about sexual abuse.
- Praise the child for telling you.
- If the assault occurred within the past 5-7 days, it is worthwhile to take your child to the emergency room. If the assault was longer ago than that, contact the authorities and wait to find out what sort of medical attention might be necessary.
- Show your support for the child. A child's greatest fear is that he or she is at fault. Eliminating this self-blame is very important.
- Remember your child assumes your reaction to the abuse is about them. Children do not understand your anger, rage, fear, and other emotions about what happened as not being about them. Your greatest challenge may be to not convey your own horror about the abuse.
- Do not go to the person accused or suspected to talk about your concern. Instead, report the concern immediately to a social service agency or the police.

- Remember that taking action is critical!! If nothing is done, other children will continue to be at risk and your child will continue to be hurt. Child sexual abuse is a community interest and concern.
- Stay calm!! If you are angry and in a rage, the child most likely will think you are angry with them, no matter what you tell them.
- Finally, do not blame yourself! Sexual abuse is a fact in our society. Many individuals who molest children find work and community activities that give them access to children. The vast majority of abuse occurs in situations where the child knows and trusts the adult.

Remember— a community and national consciousness is needed before we can stamp out sexual molestation in our society. Not talking about it openly and frequently allows it to continue!