

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Patient Assessment

Signs and Symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patient states he or she has been “sexually assaulted”, “raped”, or “sexually abused.” 	Differential Diagnosis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	Pediatric Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The protocol below also applies to children.
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Treatment Protocol

EMR

- The patient’s medical needs will always take priority over evidence collection/preservation.
- Perform standard physical exam of the patient to determine if life-threatening injuries exist. If life or limb threat exists, necessary medical intervention shall take priority over evidence preservation. However, if no life or limb threat exists, help maintain evidence collection in coordination with law enforcement.
 - Try to avoid removing clothing or separating the patient from evidence on their person.
 - If removing clothing, attempt to bag each article of clothing separately to avoid cross contamination.
 - If cutting clothing, attempt to stay at least six inches (6”) away from tears, holes, or visibly soiled areas.
 - Keep all equipment and supplies that are used to care for the patient and include them as evidence
- Patient belongings should be transported to the hospital with the patient. *Chain of custody must be maintained.*
- All belongings, removed or otherwise, should be documented in the patient’s chart.
- Patient shall remain NPO (nothing by mouth).
- If the patient must urinate, vomit, or defecate, the evidence should be collected in a clean, sterile container. The patient should not wipe afterwards. The container/specimen should be appropriately labeled.
- Do not allow the patient to urinate, wash hands, or “clean up.” If the patient insists, explain to the patient that this may destroy evidence which could be paramount in the investigation.
- Law enforcement should be notified of the sexual assault allegation, if the patient consents to the notification and the patient is not a minor.
- Do not argue with the patient about the allegations or situation surrounding the sexual assault. Take what the patient states at face value. This applies even if the patient is intoxicated or otherwise inhibited or altered.

EMT

- The patient’s medical needs will always take priority over evidence collection/preservation.
- Patient’s not requiring emergent intervention for their traumatic injuries, patients who do not meet destination criteria for Memorial Hospital South Bend, or who do not specifically request to be transported to Memorial Hospital, **shall be transported to St. Joseph Regional Medical Center for a medical forensic exam and ongoing medical care.**

AEMT

- No additional orders for this level of provider

PARAMEDIC

- No additional orders for this level of provider

LEAD PARAMEDIC

- No additional orders for this level of provider

MEDICAL CONTROL/REQUIRED CONSULTATIONS

- None

Clinical Pearls

- The medical needs of the patient will ***always*** outweigh the collection and preservation of evidence.
- Ensure you are safe to transport the patient. If there is concern the suspect may attempt to disrupt the transport, ask for a police escort or have an officer accompany the patient in the back of the ambulance.
- The sexual assault exam and care are covered by the state sexual assault victim’s fund.
- St. Joseph Hospital’s Forensic Department helps the victim by providing a comprehensive forensic exam, providing victim’s advocates, providing HIV prophylaxis, providing STI prophylaxis, and comprehensive follow-up. This applies to both adults and children.
- See definition of sexual assault and rape in the definitions section. The Indiana statute that defines sexual assault and rape is IC 35-42-4.