

# **Should I Have a Medical Examination and Evidence Collection**

*Even if I'm unsure about making a police report?*

**Yes.** Even if you are undecided about whether you want to make a police report and whether you want your assailant prosecuted, you should have evidence collected as soon as possible after a sexual assault. Here are a few reasons why.

1. This is the best way to keep your options open for the future.
2. Physical evidence is very important in sexual assault cases. Physical evidence that is present immediately after an assault will deteriorate as time passes.
3. If you do not have an examination soon after the assault, the evidence will be lost forever.

In some communities, you can consent to a medical examination and the collection of evidence and still withhold consent to release evidence to the police. The hospital or forensic clinic where you have the examination can store the evidence in a locked freezer and preserve the chain of custody. If you later decide to file a police report and participate in the prosecution of your assailant, you can give your consent at that time to release the evidence to the police.