

Your Notes

YOUR CAC NAME

CAC Address

Appointment Reminder

DAY: _____

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

Important Phone Numbers

**INFORMATION FOR
CAREGIVERS:
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE
MEDICAL EXAM**

YOUR LOGO

YOUR AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

PHOTO OF YOUR CENTER

ADD YOUR ARTWORK HERE

What is the Purpose of the Medical Evaluation?

1. To help ensure your child's health, safety and well-being
2. To diagnose, document and address any medical conditions resulting from abuse
3. To differentiate medical findings that indicate abuse from those due to other medical conditions or an accident
4. To assess your child for developmental, emotional or behavior problems that may need further evaluation
5. To reassure and educate the child and family about medical findings

Medical evaluations at BCAC are conducted by medical professionals with pediatric and child abuse expertise.

Children who may have been abused and need immediate medical evaluation are served in hospital emergency departments. If not urgent, BCAC staff will schedule the evaluation as soon as possible.

Text courtesy of Drs. Dubowitz (Anne Arundel County Child Advocacy Center) and Paylor (Frederick County Child Advocacy Center).

Frequently Asked Questions

What will the exam involve?

First, a general head to toe exam. This helps because children are used to it. Sometimes, problems related to abuse are found in other parts of the body. Unrelated medical problems may also be found. Then a careful exam of the genital and anal areas is conducted. The girl's exam is almost always limited to looking at the outside, without putting anything inside the vagina. This is NOT like an adult gynecological exam. The examination of the anus only involves looking at the outside.

Why does my child have to do this after she/he has gone through so much?

The medical evaluation is an important part of the overall evaluation of possible sexual abuse. It can find both new and old injuries, test for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) like gonorrhea and chlamydia. Children and teens may worry about their bodies following sexual abuse. This evaluation should help answer questions you or your child may have, and ease any worries about his or her body.

Why can't my regular physician or nurse do the exam? My child knows that person.

This evaluation requires special knowledge and skills concerning sexual abuse. There is a need to document the exam findings with a camera. Also, if the matter comes to court, it helps to have an expert to testify.

The incident occurred a long time ago. Is there still a need for the medical evaluation?

Yes. Even though the abuse may have happened a long ago, your child may still worry about her/his body being "damaged." Sometimes, injuries heal in ways that can still provide evidence of the abuse.

Who pays for the medical evaluation?

Health and Mental Hygiene. You do not need to pay for the exam or STI tests done here at BCAC. However, you or your insurance may be billed for follow-up care and medications.

Will I be able to be with my child throughout the physical exam?

Yes. We want you to be there to comfort your child. Older children may prefer privacy and we respect their choice.

If you have questions regarding the medical evaluation, please contact either your Family or Victim Advocate at the child advocacy center or your CPS worker.

Will this examination be uncomfortable for my child?

We try hard to make sure children are as comfortable as possible, although it's not always an easy experience for kids. Rarely, a child may get very upset. If so, we do not force the exam. Sometimes, a test for sexually transmitted infection (STI) is needed. If so, this is done with a urine sample. And, sometimes there's a need for a blood test.

Will the doctor be able to tell if my child was abused?

Most children who have been abused have normal exams. Occasionally, physical or laboratory findings confirm the diagnosis of sexual abuse. It's important to know that even when the exam is normal, this does not mean that abuse did not happen. The abuse may not have caused any injury. And, even if there was an injury, it may have healed without any scars. What your child says about what happened is the most important part.

What if my child has an STI?

We will contact and recommend next steps.

What happens after the exam? Will I get help my child's and family's mental health care needs?

Yes. Our staff can help find a counselor. Going through this process can be hard for parents, too. You may also want a referral for professional support.

Will the doctor provide a written report about the findings to Child Protective Services and law enforcement?

Yes. And, if you agree, a letter will be sent to your child's regular doctor or nurse.