

# Medical Forensic Exam

The purpose of the medical forensic exam is to address any health concerns someone might have related to sexual assault, as well as provide resources and evidence collection.

## What is a Medical Forensic Exam (MFE)?<sup>2</sup>

A MFE is unique to the patient, based on their consent to the exam, decisions regarding care, and the resources that are available at that program, clinic or facility. The MFE can include but is not limited to:

- Medical screening and evaluation
- Written and verbal consent for medical evaluation, treatment, and forensic evidence collection.
- Medical/surgical history
- Psych social information
- History of events to guide the exam
- Medical intervention:
  - STI prevention and care
  - Pregnancy prevention and care
  - HIV and Hep B prophylaxis
- Medical forensic physical examination
  - Documentation of findings within the medical forensic record
  - Photography and documentation <sup>2</sup>
    - Standard of care
    - Kept as part of the medical record
    - Protocols for storage and release
  - Evidence collection (please refer to the ISAAC Evidence collection fact sheet)
- Specialized assessments:
  - Strangulation
  - Drug-facilitated sexual assault
  - Intimate partner violence
  - Human trafficking
- Discharge, referrals and safety planning

Informed consent and the patients' choice to participate in each aspect of the medical forensic exam will be a guide throughout the exam.

- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) are registered nurses who have completed specialized education and clinical preparation in the medical forensic care of the patient who has experienced sexual assault or abuse.<sup>1</sup>
- Advocacy is a crucial part of the MFE. Advocates may be available to support the survivor before, during and/or after the MFE and through the criminal justice process.<sup>3</sup> Advocacy services can be found at: [www.isaaconline.org/advocacy](http://www.isaaconline.org/advocacy)
- Informed consent and confidentiality should be communicated with the patient in verbal and written form that is complete, clear and concise.<sup>2</sup> Ongoing verbal consent throughout the exam is important and the choice to participate should be determine by the patient.

## Reporting a Sexual Assault

Each state has their own reporting laws regarding a sexual assault, please refer to [www.safeta.org/page/PTAresource](http://www.safeta.org/page/PTAresource) to see your states reporting options. Mandatory reporting might require reporting to local law enforcement, adult protective services and/or child protective services in specific situations following specific local/state/federal/tribal laws.<sup>4</sup>

How to access resources for the Medical Forensic Exam- <https://www.isaaconline.org/resources>

[supportingourcircle.org](http://supportingourcircle.org)

1. International Association of Forensic Nurses. (2021). Sexual assault Nurse Examiners. Retrieved from <https://www.forensicnurses.org/page/aboutSANE>.
2. U.S. Department of Justice. (2017). *National Best Practices for Sexual Assault Kits: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Retrieved from <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/250384.pdf>.
3. Indigenous Sexual Assault & Abuse Clearinghouse. (N.D). *Crisis Advocacy*. <https://www.isaaconline.org/advocacy>.
4. SAFEta. 2021. *Exam Payment Resources*. Retrieved from <https://www.safeta.org/page/PTAresource>.