

WHAT TO EXPECT...

The CAC refers all children who are suspected victims of sexual abuse for a forensic medical exam by a specially trained medical provider at Pediatric Care Specialists.

The medical provider will perform a “head to toe” physical exam to assess your child’s health and well-being. She will look for signs of injury or trauma to the body, and depending on the results of the examination, may recommend a follow up exam, treatment, or additional testing. During the forensic medical exam, the physician will use a colposcope (a magnification device that stays OUTSIDE the child’s body) or a digital camera to thoroughly examine your child’s genital region. Digital photos will be taken in order to assure quality care and the physician will review this with you and your child. Throughout the exam, every effort is made to ensure that your child feels comfortable and at ease.

The medical provider will also assess your child’s emotional well-being and may refer your child to counseling or therapy.



“The medical provider will assess your child’s physical health and emotional well-being. They will assure your child that their body is okay.”



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INFORMATION GUIDE FOR
FORENSIC MEDICAL EXAM



**CIRCLE OF SUPPORT
CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER**
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Why was my child referred for a medical exam?

- To ensure the health and well-being of your child.
- To reassure your child that everything is okay with his or her body.
- To treat identified medical conditions
- To document any possible physical and forensic findings.

Will I be allowed to go into the exam room with my child?

Having a medical exam is stressful for most children even under the best of circumstances. Therefore, if age appropriate, your child can decide if they would like a caregiver, nurse and/or CAC advocate present for the exam.

The CAC advocate is available to attend the medical exam with you and your child and will discuss this with you during your CAC appointment. The medical provider and a nurse will typically be in the room for the exam.

Will the forensic medical exam hurt?

Many aspects of the exam involve the medical provider “looking” at the genital region. It is necessary to gently touch and move the male genitalia in order to thoroughly examine these features. In females, some gentle touching and manipulation of the genitals is necessary in order to visualize internal structures WITHOUT anything being inserted inside of the genital region. In both males and females, the buttocks and anal area will also be examined visually by gently parting the buttocks.

The entire exam typically takes a few minutes and is conducted at a pace that is comfortable for your child. If your child feels uncomfortable at any point, the examiner will take immediate steps to relieve their stress and/or discomfort and will stop the exam if requested to do so.

Will “evidence” be collected during the medical exam?

During the forensic medical exam at Pediatric Care Specialists, there will not be “evidence” collected. The medical provider may document her medical opinion regarding any identified physical injuries or forensic findings.

In an alleged sexual assault that occurred less than 72 hours before the disclosure, your child may have been referred to a local emergency room where a forensic rape kit was utilized to collect specimen that may be used as evidence.

What types of testing or treatment may be recommended?

All forensic medical exams may include testing for pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. This may include swab collections from the child’s body, urine collection, and referrals made to a lab for blood work. The CAC advocate will discuss this with you during your appointment.

The medical provider may provide your child with a prescription for an antibiotic or other medication when necessary, to help prevent infection or treat an identified medical condition.

When will I know the results of the exam?

The physician may be able to discuss the results of the medical exam immediately following the exam. Please keep in mind that over 90% of the time, there are NO visible signs of injury or trauma. This is NORMAL and does NOT mean that “nothing happened” to your child. The most important aspect of the medical exam is to assess your child’s well-being and to assure your child’s body is healthy.

The medical lab test results should be available within 10 days. Typically, medical providers follow a ‘no news is good news’ policy and therefore will NOT call you unless necessary or if a follow up appointment is needed. However, if you would like to inquire whether test results are back, you may do so as soon as one week after the exam.

Who receives the information from the medical exam?

During your CAC appointment, you (and your child if he/she is 14+ years old) will be asked to provide a brief medical history and to sign releases of information for Pediatric Care Specialists. The medical report will be provided to the CAC and investigative team members.

The CAC advocate is available to answer any questions you have regarding this process. If you have any additional questions about your child’s medical exam, you can contact the CAC at 814-254-4567 or Pediatric Care Specialists at 814-266-8840.