



## *Understanding P.E.R.K. Exams and Your Options After a Sexual Assault*

***Your safety and health are most important.*** Please consider seeing a health care provider even if you don't want to make a report to the police right now. The health care provider can check you for injuries and talk to you about possible pregnancy concerns and/or sexually transmitted infections. If you think you may want to report the assault, the health care provider can also collect evidence of the assault from your body. This is called a P.E.R.K. exam.

### ***Where can I get support and information?***

Sexual Assault Crisis Centers have staff and volunteers who are trained to provide free crisis-intervention and counseling services to people who have been sexually assaulted. They also have people trained to come to the hospital and/or the police station to help you. To find your local center, call the **Virginia Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-838-8238** (v/tty).

### ***What is a P.E.R.K. exam? (Physical Evidence Recovery Kit)***

A P.E.R.K. is a special medical exam given to people who have been sexually assaulted to collect evidence that may be helpful in the investigation and prosecution of the sexual assault. **If you think you may want to report the assault to the police, the sooner you have evidence collected, the better.**

### ***How soon should a P.E.R.K. exam be done?***

A P.E.R.K. exam often will not be done if more than three days have passed since the assault.

### ***Do I have to have a P.E.R.K. exam?***

No. If you have decided that you do not want to make a report to law enforcement now or in the future, then having evidence collected by having a P.E.R.K. exam may not be the right choice for you. Advocates from your Sexual Assault Crisis Center or the statewide Hotline can help you think through the choice to have or decline a P.E.R.K. exam.

### ***If I don't have a P.E.R.K. exam, will the police be called?***

By law, health care providers DO NOT have to report sexual assaults to the police unless there were certain weapons used during the assault (Virginia Code: § 54.1-2967).

*NOTE: Health care providers may have to report the sexual assault if you are under 18 or an adult who depends on another adult for care.*

### ***Who will pay for the P.E.R.K. examination?***

The Commonwealth of Virginia will pay for the costs of the P.E.R.K. exam. You do not have to participate in an investigation to have the P.E.R.K. paid for. *Your insurance will be billed first if you have Medicaid, Medicare, CHAMPUS, Tri-Care or another type of federal insurance. If you do not want the insurance information to be sent to your home, please tell the health care provider.*

### ***If I choose to have a P.E.R.K. exam, what do I need to know?***

- 1) If at any time you are uncomfortable with any part of the exam, **you have the right to stop the exam**. If you have questions about what the doctor or nurse is doing, **you have the right to ask**.
- 2) You have the right to a P.E.R.K. exam without having to talk to the police at the hospital or anytime after the assault. If you have concerns about the police respecting your choice not to talk to them, please call the Virginia Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-838-8238 (v/tty).
- 3) If you want to report the assault, the police will most likely talk to you at the hospital to get more information about what happened.
- 4) If you are unsure about reporting or you are not ready to talk to the police at the hospital, please tell the doctor, nurse or police officer.
- 5) If you are not ready to talk to the police or report the assault, the police will probably still be called by the hospital to pick up the evidence. At this time, the doctor or nurse will most likely have to give the police some information about you. If this concerns you, please talk to the doctor.
- 6) *You may be responsible for other medical costs associated with the assault. Contact the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund for more information on costs and payments.*

### ***If I choose not to talk to the police, what do I need to know?***

- 1) You can make a report to law enforcement any time you are ready. If you decide that you want to report the assault to the police, you can call 911 or your local Sexual Assault Crisis Center to help you make the call.
- 2) If you decide not to talk to the police immediately after the assault, other evidence may be lost. Immediately after an assault, the police usually try to collect other evidence from the suspect(s), the crime scene(s), and/or from you.
- 3) The sooner you report the assault to the police, the better the chance for a successful prosecution of the offender for the assault against you.

### ***If you have questions, please call:***

- Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-838-8238 (v/tty)
- Crime Victim Assistance INFO-LINE at 1-888-887-3418 (9am-5pm Mon-Friday)
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund at 1-800-552-4007

