

If you have just been raped or sexually assaulted



If you have just been raped or sexually assaulted you may be feeling many things. Some survivors report that they feel numb or shocked, confused or frightened or fragile or angry. There is no right or wrong way to feel. It might be helpful for you to know that many survivors report that these feelings do not last.

Stay Safe. Make sure that you that you are in a safe place. You are probably still in shock so try to remain calm.

Talk to someone about what has happened. You can call the National Rape Crisis helpline 0808 802 99 99 or your local rape crisis helpline. Or talk to a friend or family member, someone you trust to support you.

Get medical help. You can go along, with a friend if you want to, to your nearest Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC). SARCs have specially trained experienced professionals who can give you medical help and advice. You can have a forensic and medical examination (including tests for sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy). They can store the forensic results until you make up your mind whether to report to the police or not. Women who have just been raped in Brighton and Hove or Sussex can choose to go to the [Saturn Centre in Crawley](#). If you do go to the Saturn Centre they will ask to keep the clothes you were wearing at the time of the assault so try to remember to take a spare set of clothes with you. Please call to book an appointment as this is not a drop-in centre.

If you do not want to report or do not want to go to the SARC at this stage, you can still seek medical help from your local accident and emergency department (A&E) or by going to see your GP.

If you decide to report to the police: in an emergency you can contact 999. If you are not in an emergency, you can go to the police station either in person or ringing 101. There are no time limits for investigating or prosecuting incidents of sexual violence. You can ask a supporter to report an offence for you or do so anonymously. This can also be done through Survivors' Network. You can also contact your SARC. If you contact the police following an incident of sexual violence, the police's first concern is to ensure that your medical needs are met. They will then arrange for a forensic medical examination. They may use an early evidence kit or take you to the SARC. No evidence can be taken without your consent.

If possible:

- Do not wash
- Do not brush your teeth
- Do not have a cigarette
- Do not eat or drink
- Do not change your clothes (or keep them safely to one side)
- Try not go to the toilet
- Do not clear up anything from the area of the incident.

Don't worry if you have already done some of these things. It is quite possible that there is still forensic evidence to collect as well as injuries that can be documented.

You can also choose to do nothing now. If you feel that it would be useful for you to take time and to think about the options open to you then that is a perfectly valid decision.

Other useful contacts

National Rape Crisis Helpline – provides a telephone helpline service for women and girls who are survivors of rape, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment or any form of sexual violence.

Freephone helpline: 0808 802 9999

Opening times: Daily 12 - 2.30pm, 7 - 9.30pm

www.rapecrisis.org.uk also has a list of helplines for England & Wales & an online chat

Samaritans – Open 24 hours a day on 116 123 / www.samaritans.org

Safeline: Open to all genders, call 0808 800 5008

LGBTQ Switchboard (National Helpline): 0300 330 0630 (Daily, 10am to 10pm)

In an emergency situation, please dial 999.