Sexual Assault

Sexual assault can be physical, verbal, visual or anything that forces a person to have unwanted sexual contact. You are being sexually abused if you are forced to have sexual contact of any kind (vaginal, oral, or anal). It is called rape if penetration has occurred. Rape is a form of sexual assault and is forced on you. Sexual assault and rape is never the victim's fault.

Tests are done on the specimens taken as part of the routine exam to see if there is a risk of infection. Usually infection does not develop as a result of sexual assault. Antibiotics are sometimes used to prevent this problem. **You should have blood tests for syphilis and HIV in 6 weeks to be certain about your condition. The HIV blood test should be repeated in 6-12 months**. Medicine to prevent pregnancy may also be needed over the next few days if you are not already pregnant.

Sexual assault is the ultimate invasion of privacy. It often causes severe psychological reactions. You may feel:

- Shock.
- Disbelief.
- Fear.
- Anger.
- Depression.

It is very important that you see your doctor or a counselor to help you deal with these feelings. You may not want to talk to anyone today. Remember your caregiver can arrange for further medical care or counseling.

You are not to blame for being attacked. It is also important to understand that sexual assault is a violent, life-threatening crime, and the perpetrator is a criminal. Talking about it with friends, family, or counselors trained to assist rape victims can shorten the recovery process. Call your caregiver if you need help.

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