

Information and Resources



For Survivors of Sexual Assault
250-383-3232 - www.vsac.ca



Victoria Sexual Assault Centre

healing, education & prevention

This booklet contains important information and resources for you, including your medical and reporting options, what to expect, and the supports available to you.

The Victoria Sexual Assault Centre is a feminist organization committed to ending sexualized violence through healing, education, and prevention.

We are dedicated to supporting all women, Trans, Two-Spirit and Gender Non-Conforming survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse, through advocacy, counselling, and empowerment.

Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) provide a immediate response for all genders, 13 years of age and over who have experienced a sexual assault within the seven days.

SART services are free.

To access support, information and resources
call the **Crisis and Information Line at**
250-383-3232

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Meet the Team

The Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) is made up of Support Workers from Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (VSAC), Forensic Nurse Examiners (FNE)*, Physicians, Emergency Room Nurses, and Police/RCMP (survivor's decision).

The Team responds to sexual assault cases within seven days for survivors of all genders, 13 years of age and over. We provide information, support, medical treatment as well as collection and preservation of forensic evidence (as requested).

**FNEs are specially trained to provide care to survivors of sexual assault, and trained to find and collect evidence if you choose to have them do so.*

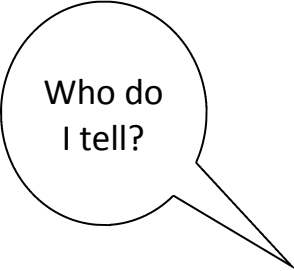
SART = Sexual Assault Response Team
VSAC = Victoria Sexual Assault Centre
FNE = Forensic Nurse Examiner

What you can expect from us:

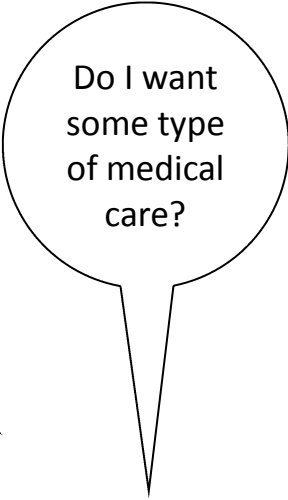
- To receive considerate and respectful care from all members of SART including your support worker, nurse, and any police officers or medical professionals involved.
- To receive full information about your options and the care and supports available.
- To have the right and the opportunity to ask questions.
- To be supported to make your own decisions regarding your medical treatment or police reporting.
- To have a support worker or a friend or family member present for support if requested.
- To receive continuing care from a medical practitioner.
- To receive support from the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre (or similar service) for future or ongoing concerns.




Choices



Who do I tell?




Do I want some type of medical care?

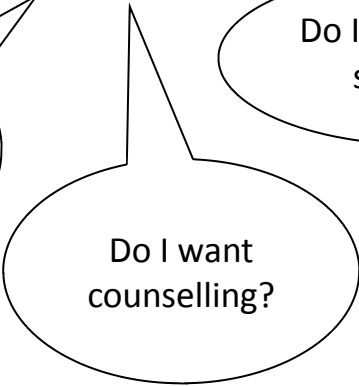


Do I need support?

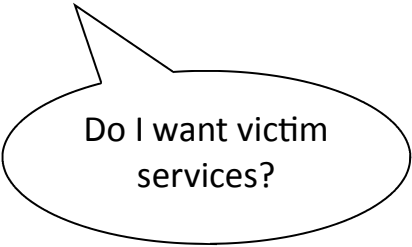
Only you know what the right decision is for you.



Do I want to talk to police?



Do I want counselling?



Do I want victim services?



Questions

I'm physically hurt (urgent medical care)

Contact 911 or go to the closest Hospital Emergency Department. Once you are medically stable, SART can be called.

I'm not safe (I'm afraid; the offender is close by)

If you are in immediate danger, contact 911. If this does not feel like an option for you, call the VSAC crisis line (250-383-3232)

I think something happened ...

Call us if you're not sure what happened. SART may not be able to tell you if something happened but we can make sure you're okay medically and offer support.

I don't want to tell ...

It's up to **you** what you say to whoever is in your life. In **rare** circumstances when someone's safety is at risk, the SART team may need to contact someone in authority, but you will be told who is being contacted and why this is happening.

My friend/partner/parent told me I should ...

It's your choice. You decide what's right for you. SART will suggest that you get medical follow-up from someone at some point but only you can decide what is best for you.

YOU ARE IN CONTROL

What Happens at the Clinic

Call
250-383-3232

Call VSAC Crisis and Information Line (or go to any hospital or contact police). The crisis line will connect you with the SART team.

Support &
Information

The SART Support Worker will provide will provide you with emotional support and explain the medical, legal and police options available to you.

Medical
Assessment

If you want to access the Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic, the SART Support Worker will connect you with the Forensic Nurse Examiner for a brief medical assessment.

Come to Clinic

The SART Support Worker can arrange transportation if you need it (at no cost to you)

Choice -
Medical

If you decide you would like medical attention, the SART Support Worker and FNE will discuss your options with you. If you any have concerns please ask your SART Support Worker or nurse.

Choice -
Police

If you would like to report the sexual assault, your SART Worker can contact the police at anytime. **It is your choice.**

Counselling or
Victim Services
Available
Anytime

Feel free to contact the VSAC Crisis and Information Line: **250-383-3232** for support, information, counselling, or victim services at anytime.

What Happens at the Hospital

Hospital
Emergency
Check-In /
Triage

When you arrive at Victoria General Hospital, you will speak with a nurse at the front desk. They will ask you for some information such as your name, address and Care Card number*.

SART
Contacted

The nurse will then take you to a private area and contact a the Forensic Nurse Examiner (FNE) and the SART Support Worker from the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre.

Support &
Information

Once at the hospital, the SART Support Worker will provide you with emotional support and explain the medical, legal and police options available to you.

Choice -
Medical

If you decide you would like medical attention, the SART Support Worker and FNE will discuss your options with you. If you have concerns please ask your SART Support Worker or nurse.

Choice -
Police

If you would like to report the sexual assault, your SART Worker can contact the police at anytime. **It is your choice.**

Counselling or
Victim Services
Available
Anytime

If you do not wish to speak to the SART Support Worker at the hospital, but would like to connect with the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre at a later time, Feel free to contact the VSAC Crisis and Information Line: **250-383-3232** for support, information, counselling, or victim services at anytime.

BC Medical Service Plan or other health insurance. Please note: If you don't have health insurance or a Care Card check in with VSAC support worker. **This will not prevent you from accessing services.*

Your Choices for Medical Care

It is **your decision** what type of medical care you will receive.

Decline

Although SART encourages you to receive medical attention at some point, it doesn't have to be right now.

Information

If you need some support or information, call us. Take the time you need to make the decisions that are right for you.

Medical Exam

You can be checked medically by the FNE. With your consent, the medical exam can include any or all of the following:

Medication: preventative treatment for some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and/or pregnancy

Medical Exam: to check that you are physically okay

Documentation of Injury: documenting any injuries, bruises or sore spots.

Forensic Exam

Medical-Forensic Exams are only available within 72 hours (3 days) after the sexual assault. There are two options available:

Evidence Given to Police: This includes everything in the Medical Exam plus the possible collection of physical evidence. All of this is handed directly to police.

Evidence Stored for One Year: This includes everything above but the evidence is not given to police without a signed consent from you. The evidence is **stored for one year** allowing you time to decide if you want to talk to the police.

You can **stop the process** or **change your mind** at any time.



Treatment for Possible Sexually Transmitted Infections and/or Pregnancy Prevention

The Forensic Nurse Examiner can treat you for some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and pregnancy prevention (if relevant).

Any blood or urine tests taken are used as a baseline and will only show whether there was an infection or pregnancy before the sexual assault. All tests are given with your consent.

STI testing is also available with a doctor, medical clinic or at Island Sexual Health.

Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis

What you need to know – Chlamydia and Gonorrhea are both bacterial infections that can grow inside the throat, bladder opening, cervix, and anus. Syphilis bacteria can grow anywhere and appears as a painless sore.

What you can do – The antibiotics offered by the FNE can treat and prevent these infections. A follow up test in two weeks with a doctor is important.

Hepatitis B

What you need to know - This sexually transmitted infection affects the liver.

What you can do – If individuals have been immunized they are protected, if not, the FNE can provide information about options. Ask the FNE or Doctor if you have concerns.

Hepatitis C

What you need to know - Contracting Hep C from sexual contact varies from situation to situation—from very low risk to high risk (blood contact). Like Hep B, it attacks the liver.

What you can do – A follow up Hep C test in 3 months and again in 6 months is important.

Herpes

What you need to know - Sores may appear on genitals or mouth in 2-15 days and can cause fever, headache and pain.

What you can do – If there are concerns you may have this infection, talk to a doctor about the treatment options available.

HIV

What you need to know - Human Immunodeficiency Virus attacks and weakens the immune system. The chances of contracting HIV vary from situation to situation—from very low risk to high risk (blood contact with someone known to carry HIV). Preventive treatment is expensive and extremely hard on your body. **Discuss your risks with the nurse or other medical practitioner or clinic.**

What you can do – A follow up HIV blood test in 6 weeks, again after 3 months, and for a third time after 6 months is important.

Pregnancy

What you need to know - Pregnancy can occur from a sexual assault.

What you can do - Plan B, an emergency contraceptive, is available as part of the medication offered by the FNE. Plan B can be taken within five days but the success rate decrease the more time elapses. You can also ask the FNE, your doctor or Island Sexual Health about other options.

**If you have questions or concerns
ask the FNE or speak with
your doctor.**

**At the end of this booklet there is a form
to keep track of your treatment and the
necessary follow-ups**



Making a Police Report

In most circumstances, it is your choice to report your sexual assault.

It is common to have mixed feelings or feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, or fear about making a police report. These feelings are valid and you can have support throughout the process if you choose to report to police.

Not right now but maybe later ...

There is no time limit - you can make a report at any time.

A medical or forensic exam is not required to make a police report.

Write down everything you can remember or write some notes for yourself if you think you might want to talk to the police at a later time.

I've already talked to the police ...

The police will give you their business card and a police file number. The police file number helps you to get information or updates from the police. A Victim Service Worker from VSAC can provide support, information and give you updates as well.

What happens next ...

Police start to investigate what happened. The police will contact you and ask you to give a recorded statement either at a police station or at VSAC Clinic. The police may interview other people who might know something about the sexual assault.

What support is available ...

The VSAC Victim Service Worker can explore your options with you before deciding to make a police report as well as go with you to police if you choose to report. They will also help with forms and keep you updated on what is happening with your report.

Call VSAC's Crisis and Information Line **250-383-3232**



Questions about Reporting to Police

What if I have concerns about my safety?

If you have concerns about your safety, one option is to call the police. They may be able to help with protection options. You can also discuss a safety plan with a VSAC support worker.

The police want me to sign a consent form ...

If you chose a Forensic Exam with evidence held at hospital, the police need your signed consent to release the evidence (kit) to them.

What kind of questions will the police ask me?

The police will ask what happened and then ask you very detailed questions. Some questions may feel embarrassing or judgmental but this doesn't mean the police do not believe you. Their role is to gather as much information as possible about what happened for the investigation. Ask for clarification from the police at any time. **This is your right.**

Can someone come with me to the police station?

Yes. A VSAC Victim Service Worker can go with you to provide support and to answer any questions. You can bring a friend or family member to the police station, but it is up to the police who can come into the interview room.

What about time off work, lost property, other costs?

The **Crime Victim Assistance Program** may offer financial help, although it may take some time to process your claim. Our Victim Service Worker can explain this program and help you with the application.

Common Reactions

There is no right or wrong way to react

You might feel:

Fear	Self-blame	Depression
Anger	Embarrassment	Confusion
Denial	Sadness	Numbness
Alone	Grief	A sense of loss

You may experience some, none, or all of these emotions.

It is common for sexual assault to affect your lifestyle, disrupt your routine, affect your relationships, school and career. **Support is available.**

You might experience:

Change in sleep patterns	Change in alcohol or drug use
Feel like a zombie	Mood swings
Trouble eating	Can't concentrate
Can't trust	Flashbacks
Isolating yourself	Nightmares
Don't want to be touched	Fear that everyone knows

Remember – you are not alone.

If you need support, information, counselling or victim services, please call

250-383-3232

Crisis and Information Line

250-383-3232 - Crisisline@vsac.ca

A 24-hour crisis line is available to anyone directly or indirectly impacted by sexualized violence. This crisis line service is made available through a partnership with the Vancouver Island Crisis Line. For information about VSAC services or referral to VSAC programs call Monday to Friday, 9:30-4:30pm. This service is TTY accessible during our office hours.

Counselling

Crisis and Stabilization (Individual) Short term support assists in dealing with the most immediate impacts after a sexual assault.

Trauma counselling (group & individual) provides support as you work through the longer term impacts of sexual assault.

Victim Services

Provides information and support as you make the decision whether or not you want to report to police; support in making a report; updates on your case; assistance with preparation for the court process; and assistance with Victim Impact forms and applications for the Crime Victim Assistance Program.

Referrals

Sexual assault impacts people of all genders and all ages. The Victoria Sexual Assault Centre provides follow-up counselling and victim services to all women, Trans, Two-Spirit and Gender Non-Conforming survivors. VSAC can also provide referrals to other similar services such as: Child Abuse Prevention & Counselling Centre (children and families); Men's Trauma Centre (all men and Trans survivors); or services in other communities.



Important Phone Numbers

Victoria Sexual Assault Centre	250-383-3232
Vancouver Island Crisis Line	1-888-494-3888
Victoria General Hospital (ER)	250-727-4212
Island Sexual Health	250-592-3479
Victoria Child Abuse Prevention & Counselling Centre (children and families)	250-385-6111
Youthspace.ca	(text only) 778-783-0177
Men's Trauma Centre	381-MENS (6367)
VictimLink (multilingual)	1-800-563-0808
1-800-Suicide	1-800-784-2433
Trans Lifeline	1-877-330-6366
Victoria Women's Transition House	250-385-6611
Cridge Transition House	250-479-3963
Victoria & Esquimalt Police	250-995-7654
Saanich Police	250-475-4321
North Saanich RCMP	250-656-3921
Oak Bay Police	250-592-2424
Central Saanich Police	250-652-4441
Westshore RCMP	250-474-2264
Sooke RCMP	250-642-5241

My Records

Medical records about my visit will be stored at:

Victoria General Hospital or

or _____

I was seen at Victoria Sexual Assault Clinic

Victoria General Hospital

Or:

Date seen _____

VSAC SART
Worker _____

FNE (Nurse) _____

Medication for Gonorrhoea and Chlamydia

Medication: _____

Medical Exam

Forensic Exam with evidence held at Hospital

Securely Stored Until (date): _____

Forensic Exam with evidence given to Police

Police Department _____

File # _____

Officers _____

My Records 2

Medical Follow Up

My test results will be sent to _____

Phone _____

Follow up tests can be done at _____

Recommended Dates for Follow Up:

Gonorrhoea	_____	Chlamydia	_____
Syphilis (blood)	_____	HIV (blood)	_____
Pregnancy	_____	Other:	_____

Vaccines/Medication—Recommended Dates for Follow Up:

Hepatitis B - 1st vaccine _____

Hepatitis B - 2nd vaccine _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Victoria Sexual Assault Centre Follow Up

Someone from VSAC will call me to check in

I didn't want to be contacted but can call 250-383-3232 when I'm ready for information, support, victim services or counselling

