

What happens then?

While you are giving your statement and having a medical exam, the Police will begin interviewing any witnesses, searching the scene of the crime, and collecting any evidence. The investigation can take anywhere between a few days to a few months. The detective in charge of the case should keep you informed about what is happening, and you have the right to contact them and ask any questions you have about the progression of the case.

If enough evidence is collected to corroborate your statement, the case may go to court. If this happens, you become a witness in the Police's case against the accused. As a witness, you will testify before a jury about what happened and be asked questions by both the Crown Prosecutor (the lawyer working for the Police) and the defence lawyer, who represents the accused. You do not need to arrange your own lawyer.

What if it happened a while ago?

Not everyone is able or willing to report an assault immediately. You can wait months, or even years before reporting the offence. If you choose to do this, Police procedures are similar to those in recent assault cases, although a medical exam might not be needed.

It can be useful to make an appointment with the Police to lay your complaint, as this gives you a chance to organise a support person (if you want one) and ensures an officer is available to take your statement when you get to the station.

Reporting to the Police

Rape Prevention Education
Rape Crisis Auckland Inc.
Ph. (09) 360 4001
Fax. (09) 360 4015
Email: info@rapecrisis.org.nz

REPORTING TO THE POLICE



Rape
Prevention
Education

RAPE CRISIS AUCKLAND INCORPORATED
WHAKATU MAURI

*Supporting survivors of sexual violence & their whanau.
Working to eliminate rape and sexual abuse through
education and community work.*

CONTACT DETAILS

Crisis phone 360 4004
Office phone 360 4001
Fax 360 4015
TTY 360 4004

PO Box 78 307, Grey Lynn, Auckland
E-mail info@rapecrisis.org.nz
Website www.rapecrisis.org.nz

Should I report the abuse?

Choosing to report a sexual assault to the Police is a decision that every person has the right to make for themselves. You may choose to report the assault immediately after it happens, or you may decide to wait a few months or even years. Some people choose not to report sexual abuse or rape to the Police at all. This doesn't mean that they cannot access support or information from a sexual assault agency or other health professional.

There are a variety of reasons why someone may not want to report sexual assault to the Police. Some people fear retribution from the offender, or are worried that they won't be believed. Others think the process of reporting, and the criminal trial that may follow, will be too traumatic. There are agencies that can help to make this process easier.

As many offenders commit crimes more than once, reporting sexual abuse or rape can be beneficial in preventing the cycle of offending.

Don't be discouraged about reporting if you don't remember much about what happened, or are unsure about the identity of the offender. Any information you can remember about the assault may be important.

Reporting recent assault/ abuse

If you choose to report an assault that has occurred within the past few weeks, the Police will want to take a statement from you as soon as they can. An officer will take an initial statement asking general questions about what happened. This usually takes about thirty minutes. The initial statement gives the Police an idea of how to proceed in investigating the case, especially in regard to whether a medical examination is necessary and how to contact any witnesses.

Making an official statement

When you report a sexual assault to the Police, an officer will work with you to write a detailed account of what happened. This is called an official statement. This statement will usually be taken by the detective in charge of the case. When available, this detective will be female. If you are not happy with the gender of the detective assigned to your case, you have the right to request another detective. You should be aware that the appropriate gender detective may not be available for some time.

The official statement is sometimes taken immediately after you go to the Police, or may be delayed if, for example, a medical examination is needed urgently or you are too distressed or tired to make a statement. Making a statement typically takes between 3-6 hours, because the Police must collect information that is as detailed as possible. You can take a break as often as you want to.

You have the right to have a support person, like a friend or family member, present as you make your statement. The Police may also call in a trained counsellor to act as an advocate and support person for you; this person will either be from Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP or South Auckland Counselling Services. If the Police do not contact this support person for you, you have the right to ask for one to be present.

Check out the Rape Prevention Education website
www.rapecrisis.org.nz

The medical examination

A medical examination is necessary in most recent assault cases. This exam is done to ensure your physical well being (e.g. to check for and treat injuries and administer any medications that are needed) and to collect any physical evidence of the assault that is present.

In cases of suspected drug rape or extreme alcohol consumption, the doctor will take a urine and blood sample as supporting evidence to show that you were beyond the point of being able to give consent at the time of the assault.

The exam will be conducted by a doctor from Doctors for Sexual Abuse Care (DSAC). DSAC is a group of specially trained practitioners who are experienced in working with survivors of sexual assault. A support person and a trained counsellor can be present if you would like them to be. Medical examinations typically last around 3 hours, and are free.

A medical check-up is also available from a DSAC doctor if you choose not to report the assault to the Police. However, as no evidence will be collected if you are not reporting to the Police, this type of exam does not help your case if you choose to report the offence at a later date. This exam is thus solely to ensure your physical health. Contact Rape Prevention Education or your nearest sexual assault agency if you would like more information about a medical examination or how to contact DSAC doctors in your area.