



## *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 have a P.E.R.K. exam, do I have to report the assault to the police?***

No. You may have evidence collected by a P.E.R.K. exam even if you are not ready to report the assault or talk to the police. 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. *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**. The doctor or nurse will most likely ask you if you want the police to be contacted.
- 2) If you are not ready to report the assault or talk to the police, please let the doctor, nurse, or sexual assault victim advocate know.
- 3) If you are prepared to report the assault, the doctor or nurse will contact the police. The police will most likely come to the hospital to talk to you to get more information about what happened. They will also pick up the evidence collected from the P.E.R.K. exam.
- 4) 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 need time to think about talking to the police and I am not prepared to release my name to the police, what do I need to know?***

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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.
- 3) The P.E.R.K. will need to be stored while you decide if you want to talk to the police. Some law enforcement agencies will pick up the P.E.R.K. without getting your name or talking to you. If law enforcement will not pick up the P.E.R.K. without your name, you may request that the P.E.R.K. be stored by the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services for temporary storage (120 days). This will protect your privacy until you decide whether or not you want to report the assault to the police.
- 4) You can make a report to law enforcement at any time. 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.

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

- Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-838-8238 (v/tty)
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund at 1-800-552-4000

