

### What should I do after the exam?

Counseling is recommended, following an abuse allegation. A mental health counselor trained in trauma therapy may be a good option for your child. The Victim Advocate, Family Advocate, or CYF Caseworker can also help identify a counselor for your child.

### Will I be given a report?

Depending on the age of the child, medical staff will discuss the results of the exam with the child. For young children, the physician or nurse practitioner will review the findings with the parent or legal guardian without the child present. Written findings can sometimes be provided at the time of the exam, if desired.

### Who can access the child's medical record of this exam?

Records are stored at A Child's Place, PA. Medical information release forms are prepared by the Family Advocate, prior to, or on the day of the forensic interview. Medical information releases may be signed for law enforcement, children and youth services, the parent or legal guardian, and for any medical facility where the child receives ongoing care.

It's important to get the medical records for any facility where the child was seen for the abuse allegations prior to the medical consultation and exam.

If criminal charges are filed, the medical report will likely become evidence whether there are findings or not. The physician may also testify about the medical findings in criminal proceedings. The investigating parties will be informed of the outcome of the exam. They will use this information in the course of their investigation and to assist with support the child and family.

The medical consult/exam is an important part of the investigation of alleged abuse and neglect. A Child's Place Family Advocate and staff will work with you and the child throughout this process. If you have any questions or concerns, contact A Child's Place or any of the resources listed here.



**The medical consultation is scheduled for:**

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**\*\*FOR YOURS AND OTHERS PRIVACY,  
PLEASE ARRIVE AT YOUR SCHEDULED TIME\*\***

**Location:**

## Resources

Investigating Officer:

CYF/CYS Caseworker:

Victim Advocate:

Family Advocate:



**Backed by  
National Children's Alliance®  
Accredited Member**

Main Office: 412-232-7200 / Fax: 412-232-8273  
Monday - Friday  
8:30 am - 4:00 pm



## Forensic Medical Consult

*Information for Parents  
& Legal Guardians*

## A Child's Place Child Advocacy Center

**Allegheny County  
Armstrong County  
Beaver County  
Butler County  
Fayette County  
Greene County  
Washington County  
Westmoreland County  
412-232-7200**



# questions & answers

## Why does a child need a medical exam?

The forensic process has two parts:

- Forensic interview
- Medical consult/exam

A medical consultation is recommended for all children no matter the circumstances or allegations. The medical exam is child-friendly, non-threatening, and non-invasive, and is completed by a Physician or Nurse Practitioner with specialized training in child abuse.

The purpose is to:

- Assess the health and safety of the child
- Assess for physical findings of abuse
- Recommendations, follow-up, labs and treatment if needed
- Identify and document any additional medical needs
- Reassure the child about their body and health
- Provide education for the child and/or caregiver:
  - How to talk about their bodies
  - How to protect their bodies
  - Answer developmental and care questions
  - Answer questions or concerns about their private parts

## A medical exam should be done as soon as possible if:

- There was a sexual assault within the last 72 hours
- There is evidence of injury complaints of pain, bleeding or discharge from their vagina, penis, or anus
- The child is suicidal
- The child is at risk for running away

*Please share your concerns with the investigating officer or caseworker. It is best to do an emergency medical exam through A Child's Place if possible.*



## How do I prepare a child?

For young children:

- The medical visit is to make sure that their body is healthy
- Reassure them the exam will not hurt
- There are no shots or needles
- Parent/guardian or trusted adult can be with them during the consult/exam

For older children:

- Tell them you support them
- The consult is to ensure that the child has no injuries or other health concerns
- Health information is kept private
- Allow the child to ask questions-If you don't know the answers, call us
- **MOST IMPORTANT**-Tell the child they are in charge of their body.



## What can I expect from the medical exam?

The parent or legal guardian for the child, or child over age 14, will need to sign consent forms for the medical consult/exam. This will be done the day of the forensic interview, or via DocuSign. The Family Advocate will meet with the parent/legal guardian and child to explain the medical consult process. Please bring the child's medical card. It will be needed for any lab testing and some exams. There will be no charge to you or the family from us.

In general, parents/caregivers are often more anxious about the medical consult/exam than the child. It is normal to be anxious, but you, as the supportive adult and an important part of the medical visit. The medical staff and Parent Advocate will answer any questions and assist you and the child. Don't hesitate to ask questions or voice concerns.

On the day of the medical consult/exam, the child's height and weight will be measured, and the medical staff will obtain a complete medical history. Any concerns will be discussed. A brief exam of the child's heart, lungs, eyes, ears, nose, throat, belly back and skin is completed. The physician or nurse practitioner will then discuss private parts, rules, and self-protection. The child and caregiver are offered testing for any infections and are offered a genital exam. If the child and caregiver agree to the genital exam, the exam is explained in detail. Everything is done with the consent of the child and their caregiver, with an emphasis on the child learning to protect their body.

The child is given clothing to ensure privacy. The genital and anal areas are viewed with a light that magnifies and does not touch the child. The examiner's hands may touch the child, only on the outside of their body. Any lab tests are done by urine samples, or a Q-tip swab touched to the outside of the child's body. You will have an opportunity to discuss the exam, findings and any questions, with the physician, prior to, during, and after the exam.

## What does it mean if there are no findings?

It is common for the medical genital exams to be normal. This does not mean sexual abuse did not occur. It can be reassuring to you and the child to know that their body is normal and has no lasting physical signs of abuse. It is important to reassure the child that you believe them regardless of the exam's findings. It is also common for children to ask questions about their bodies. Be supportive and encourage your child to continue to do the things they enjoy.

[www.achildsplacepa.org](http://www.achildsplacepa.org)

