

HOSPITAL INSTRUCTIONS

INTRODUCTION

- The Sexual Assault Evidence Kit (SAEK) is used to document the collection of physical evidence that may assist in the investigation of a sexual assault. All information provided with the SAEK is subject to disclosure and may be made available to the defence.
- Note that a lack of physical evidence neither confirms nor refutes a recent sexual assault.
- In general, there is a progressive loss of physical evidence with time. The patient should be examined as soon as possible by a physician or nurse examiner for the collection of evidence for forensic analysis.
- The physician or nurse examiner should **use discretion** as to which samples are collected for forensic evidence. Their decisions should be based on the history of the assault, the time interval between the assault and the examination for the collection of evidence samples, and if possible, consultation with the investigating officer.
- Hospital staff should not ask the patient for a detailed statement of the assault. Information about the assault should be gathered only to inform and guide the forensic medical exam. It is the responsibility of the police to obtain a detailed statement from the patient.
- Reactions to sexual assault vary widely and the examination may be difficult for the patient. In all cases the patient must be respected and part of the examination may have to be omitted or deferred unless medically indicated.

IMPORTANT: Attend to urgent medical needs before proceeding with the forensic examination.

CONSENT FOR EVIDENCE COLLECTION

The patient/guardian *must* give informed consent. Ensure that the ***Consent for Sexual Assault Evidence Collection*** form is signed in all the appropriate places and dated.

There is no age of consent for use of this kit. In order to give consent, the patient must be able to understand the information that is relevant to making a decision about the use of the kit *and* be able to appreciate the reasonably foreseeable consequences of a decision or lack of decision. If the patient is not capable of consenting, then consent from a guardian must be obtained.

DOCUMENTATION

- All forms should be completed by the physician/nurse examiner.
- Medical care such as STD/pregnancy prophylaxis should be documented on the hospital chart. These records should not be included as part of the SAEK and therefore should not be forwarded to the police.

HOSPITAL TO RETAIN:

White copies of:

- Consent for Sexual Assault Evidence Collection
- Consent to Release Sexual Assault Evidence Kit to Police
- Forensic Evidence Form
- Physical Examination Form

ENCLOSE WITH KIT:

Blue copy of:

- Forensic Evidence Form

GIVE TO POLICE:

Yellow copies of:

- Consent to Release Sexual Assault Evidence Kit to Police
- Forensic Evidence Form
- Physical Examination Form

RELEASING SAEK TO POLICE

The patient *must* sign the ***Consent to Release Sexual Assault Evidence Kit to Police*** form in order to release the SAEK to the police; otherwise the police require a search warrant to obtain the evidence.

The consent form to release the kit must be signed by the police officer accepting the kit.

If the SAEK is turned over to the police immediately, the sealed kit, fridge & freezer transport bags and clothing bags must then be provided to the police officer, along with the relevant forms.

STORAGE

If the police are not involved immediately, the kit and any relevant clothing should be sealed and may be stored at room temperature with the following exceptions:

- Refrigerate blood & urine samples
- Freeze tampons, sanitary napkins, post-void toilet tissue, diapers and condoms

LEFT-OVER ITEMS

Unused item labels, seals and stickers must be discarded. Other kit items that are not used during the examination may be recycled. The hospital has the option to keep these left-over items for hospital use.

EVIDENCE COLLECTION

- Follow and complete the ***Forensic Evidence Form***.
- For best forensic practice, collect evidence in the order outlined below
- It is recommended that a clean pair of examination gloves be used for each step to prevent contamination.
- If possible, the patient should not void until **Steps 1 to 10** have been completed to avoid loss of evidential material. If not possible, avoid wiping or save the tissue in jar 7-4 and freeze.
- Scissors are not included in this kit. Use a sterile pair of scissors when necessary.
- Secure all containers using the white stickers provided. Alternatively, clear tape may be used (not provided).
- Item labels are not tamper-evident. Do not use these as seals.
- If using the French item labels, be sure to write in the SAEK number as well.
- Ensure completed item labels are affixed to containers in a way that they can be easily read.
- Use page 4 of the ***Forensic Evidence Form*** to record any additional information that may be of forensic relevance.
- Place all evidence items in the kit, with the exception of the fridge, freezer and clothing bags. Small clothing items, such as underwear, may be placed directly into the kit.

STEP 1: CLOTHING AND DROP SHEET

Collect at discretion of physician/nurse examiner and in consultation with officer when possible.

COLLECT IF:

- **Underwear (always collect)**
 - **Clothing was worn during or immediately after the assault**
 - **Not washed after assault**
 - **External ejaculation / drainage / blood / saliva transfer on specific areas**
1. Have the patient stand on the two drop sheets provided. One sheet is placed on the floor; the other sheet is placed on top of the first sheet.
 2. Remove each item of clothing (including shoes) separately.
 3. Place articles of clothing in separate paper bags as removed. Bag items over drop sheet to prevent loss of trace material.
 4. Secure each bag with a white sticker, affix item label(s) **1-1 to 1-8** to the bag(s) and indicate the clothing item on each item label and on the form.
 5. Carefully fold the **top drop sheet** to enclose any debris and place in the **Step 1 Envelope**. Seal this envelope and affix item label **1-9**. Discard the bottom drop sheet.
 6. The evidence-drying pouch may be used to hold the clothing bags or may be used to hold one large, bulky clothing item. Ensure the pouch is sealed. Affix SAEK number sticker to the evidence-drying pouch.

Once the kit is open, never leave evidence unattended. Use the tamper evident seals provided.

7. Place the envelope containing the drop sheet in the kit and any packaged clothing in the evidence-drying pouch in a secure location until forwarded to the investigating officer.

STEP 2: ORAL SAMPLES

COLLECT IF:

- **Within 24 hours**
- **Oral penetration (penile) is suspected or unknown**
- **No condom used / condom not intact / unknown**

1. Take 2 oral swabs (preferably taken simultaneously) by thoroughly rubbing along gum and teeth margin.
2. Using either swab, make an oral smear by holding the microscope slide with the frosted side up and rolling the swab within the clear portion.
3. Place each swab in a separate swab box. Ensure the boxes are properly closed, and secure each end with a white sticker. Affix item label 2-1 to the first box and 2-2 to the second box.
4. Allow slide to air dry and place in holder. Affix item label 2-3 on the holder, and secure the holder with a white sticker/tape.
5. Place holder into the envelope provided and seal.

For Hospital Use Only - Do not submit with kit. Swab is not included in the kit:
Take pharyngeal swab for gonorrhea if oral penetration has occurred.

STEP 3: FINGERNAIL SAMPLES

If clippings are to be done, do not take swabs. Use a different pair of scissors for each hand.

COLLECT IF:

- **Within 72 hours**
- **Scratching or a struggle is alleged**
- **Patient did not shower / bathe prior to SAEK**

1. Collect fingernail swabs / clippings (3-1 for left hand; 3-2 for right hand) for each hand separately.
2. Place hand over a collection sheet, clip or use a tapered swab (moistened with sterile water) to sample fingernails and fold the drop sheet to enclose clippings or loosened debris.
3. **For swabs:** place swabs for 3-1 and 3-2 in the separate swab tubes. Place tubes with corresponding folded collection sheet into separate envelopes and seal. Affix item labels to the envelopes.
4. **For clippings:** fold clippings for 3-1 and 3-2 within their own drop sheet, and place into separate envelopes and seal. Affix item labels to the envelopes.

STEP 4: SKIN SAMPLES

COLLECT IF:

- **Within 72 hours**

4 *Once the kit is open, never leave evidence unattended. Use the tamper evident seals provided.*

- Patient did not shower / bathe prior to SAEK
- Suspected transfer of blood / semen / saliva (licking/kissing/biting) to non-genital areas
- Patient does not recall events, collect swab of each breast
- Note: Collect regardless of observed luminescence with alternate light source (e.g. Woods Lamp)

1. Moisten a swab with sterile water.
2. Using swab, collect any potential deposits on the skin including bite marks.
3. Use one swab for each site.
4. Place each swab in a separate swab box. Ensure the box(es) is / are properly closed, and secure each end with a white sticker. Affix item label(s) 4-1, 4-2, 4-3, and 4-4 and indicate the body site swabbed on each item label and on the form.

STEP 5: HEAD HAIR SAMPLES

COLLECT ALWAYS (if available)

1. Over drop sheet, collect head hairs shed by patient by massaging scalp and combing hair.
2. Fold drop sheet containing hair and comb and place into envelope and seal.
3. Affix item label 5-1.

STEP 6: BLOOD SAMPLE

Note: The expiry date on blood collection tubes is the manufacturer's guarantee of the time period that the blood collection tube will retain an optimal vacuum. Use of the blood tube beyond the expiry date indicates to the user that the vacuum within the tube may not be sufficient to effectively draw blood. Nevertheless, based on previous experience the vacuum in expired tubes is still sufficient to permit the collection of a blood sample and would not be expected to have a forensically significant impact on toxicological analyses.

If blood cannot be collected into the tube, regardless if expired or not, another tube must be used.

COLLECT IF:

- Within 3 days

1. Take 1 tube of blood (grey top) for **forensic analysis**. Do not fill the tube completely.
2. Place the tube in the protective foam holder.
3. Fill out the information required on the blood bag (6-1), place foam holder inside blood bag (XXXXXL where XXXXX is the SAEK number) and seal the bag.
4. Place sealed blood bag in the Fridge Transport Bag (XXXXXR where XXXXX is the SAEK number). Do not seal this bag until Step 12 is complete.

For Hospital Use Only - Do not submit with kit. Tubes are not included in the kit.
Collect 5 ml of BLOOD for Hepatitis B screen, 5ml of BLOOD for hold (future HIV testing or baseline HIV testing if patient accepts HIV PEP) and if necessary, 5 ml of BLOOD for HCG. Other tests may be medically indicated. Refer to ***Guidelines for Medical Care*** regarding HIV and hepatitis protocol.

STEP 7: PUBIC HAIR AND FOREIGN MATERIAL

ITEM 7-2 COLLECT ALWAYS (if available)

ITEMS 7-1, 7-3 and 7-4 COLLECT IF:

- **Within 72 hours**
- **Patient did not shower/bathe prior to SAEK**

ITEM 7-5 (Tampons, sanitary napkins and diapers) COLLECT up to 7 days regardless of shower/bath prior to SAEK

1. Using a sterile pair of scissors, cut out any deposits found in the pubic hair.
2. Place deposits in a collection sheet provided, fold and place in an envelope and seal. Label envelope 7-1.
3. Using another drop sheet and the comb, comb the pubic hair for loose hairs, fibres, etc.
4. Place combings and comb on collection sheet, fold to enclose contents and place in an envelope and seal. Label envelope 7-2.
5. Place any foreign material (i.e. hairs, fibres, etc.) found in vagina/rectum on a new drop sheet, fold and place in an envelope and seal. Label envelope 7-3.
6. If foreign material requires freezing (i.e. used condom, post-void toilet tissue), place material in jar and affix label 7-4. Place jar in Freezer Transport Bag (XXXXXF where XXXXX is the SAEK number) . Do not seal bag until Step 10 is complete.
7. Place used tampons, sanitary napkins, or diapers in the white bag or a paper bag provided and affix item label 7-5. Place in Freezer Transport Bag (XXXXXF where XXXXX is the SAEK number). Do not seal bag until Step 10 is complete.

STEP 8: EXTERNAL GENITALIA SAMPLES

COLLECT IF:

- **Suspected or unknown penile penetration of the vagina or rectum (with or without condom) – collect within 7 days regardless of shower / bath prior to SAEK**

AND/OR

- **Suspected or unknown cunnilingus or fellatio – collect within 72 hours and only if patient did not shower / bathe prior to SAEK**

AND/OR

- **Suspected or unknown digital penetration of the vagina or rectum – collect within 72 hours and only if patient did not shower / bathe prior to SAEK**

1. Use two swabs (preferably taken simultaneously) moistened with sterile water to collect any potential deposits on external genitalia from a female patient.
2. For a male patient, use one swab only, moisten in sterile water and collect material from the exterior surface of the penis.
3. Place each swab in a separate swab box. Ensure the boxes are properly closed, and secure each end with a white sticker. Affix item label 8-1 to the first box and 8-2 to the second box.

STEP 9: VAGINAL SAMPLES

Note: Warm speculum under tap water – DO NOT USE lubricant or lubricated specula.

COLLECT IF:

- **Within 7 days**
 - **Collect regardless of possible condom use**
 - **Penile penetration of the vagina is suspected or unknown**
 - OR**
 - **Digital penetration of the vagina is alleged**
1. Use speculum if possible. If speculum is not used, note this on the examination form.
 2. Take two swabs of the vaginal fornix (not cervix) (preferably taken simultaneously). Swab thoroughly.
 3. In pre-pubertal females use swabs moistened in sterile water and swab the introitus, which is the external area around the opening of the vagina to the hymen.
 4. Using either swab, make a vaginal smear by holding the microscope slide with the frosted side up and rolling the swab within the clear portion.
 5. Place each swab in a separate swab box. Ensure the boxes are properly closed, and secure each end with a white sticker. Affix item label **9-1** to the first box and **9-2** to the second box.
 6. Allow slide to air dry and place in holder. Affix item label **9-3** on the holder, and secure the holder with a white sticker/tape.
 7. Place holder into the envelope provided and seal.
 8. Use containers **7-3** or **7-4** (see Step 7) for foreign material found in the vagina. Affix the appropriate item labels.

For Hospital Use Only - Do not submit with kit. Swabs are not included in the kit.

Adult Females: Do a cervical swab for gonorrhea and chlamydia and a vaginal swab for trichomonas.

Prepubertal Females: Moisten swabs in appropriate transport medium and swab introitus for gonorrhea, chlamydia and trichomonas.

STEP 10: RECTAL SAMPLES

COLLECT IF:

- **Within 3 days**
 - **Collect regardless of possible condom use**
 - **Penile penetration of the rectum is suspected or unknown** **OR**
 - **Digital penetration of the rectum is alleged**
1. After cleansing anal area with sterile water, take two rectal swabs (preferably taken simultaneously).
 2. Using either swab, make a rectal smear by holding the microscope slide with the frosted side up and rolling the swab within the clear portion.
 3. Place each swab in a separate swab box. Ensure the boxes are properly closed, and secure each end with a white sticker. Affix item label **10-1** to the first box and **10-2** to the second box.

Once the kit is open, never leave evidence unattended. Use the tamper evident seals provided.

4. Allow slide to air dry and place in holder. Affix item label **10-3** on the holder, and secure the holder with a white sticker/tape.
5. Place holder into the envelope provided and seal.
6. Use containers **7-3** or **7-4** (see Step 7) for foreign material found in the rectum. Affix the appropriate item labels.
7. Seal the Freezer Transport Bag and **freeze** until the kit is forwarded to the investigating police officer.

For Hospital Use Only - Do not submit with kit. Swab is not included in the kit.
Do rectal swab for gonorrhea and chlamydia if rectal penetration has occurred.

STEP 11: DNA REFERENCE SAMPLE

COLLECT ALWAYS

1. Have patient thoroughly rinse mouth with 10 ml sterile water and discard.
2. Using the foam-tipped applicator, thoroughly rub the inside of the cheeks, tongue and gums using an up and down motion.
3. Alternatively, the patient may perform this step if patient feels more comfortable.
4. Handle the collection card by the edges only (wearing gloves).
5. Firmly press both sides of the applicator onto the circle on the collection card using a rocking motion.
6. Place the collection card and desiccant into the self-sealing bag provided.
7. Discard the foam tip applicator.
8. Affix item label **11-1** to the self-sealing bag.

STEP 12: URINE SAMPLE

COLLECT IF:

- **Within 7 days**

1. Collect urine for **forensic analysis** in sterile container **not provided in the kit**.
2. Pour at least 20 ml of urine into jar provided.
3. Replace cap, close tightly.
4. Fill out the information required on the urine bag, place jar inside bag and seal the bag.
5. Place sealed urine bag (**6-2**) in the Fridge Transport Bag with the blood collected in Step 6.
6. Seal the Fridge Transport Bag and **refrigerate** until kit is forwarded to the investigating police officer.

Once complete, close the kit and secure with a SAEK seal and store at room temperature or in the freezer until forwarded to the investigating police officer.