If you've been sexually assaulted,
You Have Options

Connect with us if you would like support navigating your options. Embrace services are kind, confidential, non-judgmental, and at no cost to you.

Covering the Cost of Medical Care

If you decide to seek medical care to collect evidence from the assault, there are options available to cover the cost.

WI Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) Fund
The WI SAFE Fund is a program that reimburses health care providers for the cost of a forensic medical exam. The health care provider is responsible for submitting the paperwork. If you choose to get an exam to collect evidence from the assault, this program can cover the costs if at least one of the below statements applies to your situation:

- Don't want to report the sexual assault.
- Don't want to cooperate with law enforcement.
- Don't want to submit the bill to your current insurance program.
- Don't have insurance.

Crime Victim Compensation (CVC)
If you report the sexual assault to law enforcement within 5 days of the assault and you plan to participate in the investigation, cost of the exam can be reimbursed by CVC. There are other eligible expenses that may be covered by CVC including mental health counseling and replacement costs for bedding or clothes collected as evidence. An Embrace advocate or the Victim/Witness Coordinator can help you complete the paperwork and answer any questions you may have about this program.

Interpreter services are available for survivors receiving services. You have the right to an interpreter at no cost to you.

Need to talk?

Rusk County 24-Hour Office and Safe Shelter
107 Lindoo Ave. E., Ladysmith, WI 54848
715-532-6976

Price County Office
305 S. Avon Ave., Phillips, WI 54555
715-339-4521

Washburn County Office
702 N. Front St., Spooner, WI 54801
715-635-5245

Barron County Office
12 W. Marshall St., Suite 105
Rice Lake, WI 54868
715-537-6334

www.embracewi.org

Embrace welcomes and respects all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
**Obtaining Medical Care**

### Medical Forensic Exam

A medical forensic exam, sometimes called a SANE exam (Sexual Assault Nurse Exam), is an exam completed by a specially trained nurse to collect evidence after an assault. Evidence can be best collected within 5 days (120 hours) of the assault, but you can decide to get an exam even after that timeframe.

Not all hospitals have trained forensic nurses. Contact Embrace if you would like assistance finding a facility with trained forensic nurses available.

- Having an exam completed does not require you to report to law enforcement (unless you are under 18, then the nurse would be required to report to law enforcement).
- During an exam, the nurse will make sure you’re medically okay (check for injuries, test for STIs, etc.) and collect physical evidence of the crime.
- The process can take up to 6 hours. However, nothing will happen during the exam without you saying so. You can consent to any or all parts of the exam. You can stop the exam at any time.
- Your evidence collection kit can be submitted anonymously. A case number that uses no identifying information about you will be assigned and the kit will be sent to the WI State Crime Lab by the forensic nurse.
- If you are not ready or don’t want to report to law enforcement, evidence can be stored for 10 years. If you decide to report later, you will have to sign a release with the hospital to share your name and evidence with law enforcement. After 10 years, the evidence is destroyed.

**Follow-Up Medical Care**

If you don’t want to get a medical forensic exam or if it has been past 5 days since the assault, you can still receive follow-up medical care by going to:

- Emergency Room
- Urgent Care
- Your Primary Care Physician
- Your Public Health Department
- St. Croix Valley SART

Health care providers can check your physical well-being, provide testing, and/or treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), as well as offer emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy. If you want, an Embrace advocate can come with you to provide support and accompaniment during these appointments.

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**Reporting to Law Enforcement**

The decision to report to law enforcement is entirely yours. If you decide to report, law enforcement may conduct a thorough investigation; they may ask you to go to the hospital to get a medical forensic exam to collect evidence if the assault occurred within the past 5 days. However, you can still report even if you don’t want to get evidence collected at the hospital. You can report the assault at any time.

During the investigation, law enforcement may contact the person who hurt you and any witnesses to the crime to hear their side of the story. The evidence will then be passed on to the District Attorney’s office who then decides if the case can be charged.

**Disclaimer:** Once the report has been made, the justice system may still continue even without your participation. You may hear from the Victim/Witness Coordinator who is employed by the District Attorney’s office. This person maintains contact with you throughout the criminal justice process to give updates on the case. You can change your mind about participating in the case at any time.

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**Aftermath of Sexual Assault**

There is no right or wrong way to react to sexual assault. Every survivor reacts in different ways and all reactions are valid. Sexual assault can have psychological, emotional, and physical effects on a survivor which could include eating disorders, sleep disorders, depression, anxiety, self-harm behaviors, flashbacks, suicidal thoughts, and substance abuse. Some survivors may not develop any symptoms at all or reactions to the trauma may appear at a later time.

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**Exploring Your Options**

Whether the assault happened recently or years ago, you have options and support available to you. Many survivors of sexual assault don’t report what happened to them right away, if at all. You are in control of the information you share, who you share it with, and what you want to happen with it.

Embrace hopes whatever options you choose, they are the right choice for you and will help you find safety, justice, and healing. Know that Embrace advocates are available 24/7 to support you in exploring your options.

*Please note, options may look different if you are under 18. Contact Embrace for more information.*