

Sexual assault management

Evidence collection summary

Use when police not present to manage evidence

Read me first!

Patients should not wash or wipe themselves unless they do not want a forensic examination. They should also not eat, drink, smoke or chew gum, and not pass urine until 'early evidence' has been taken.

Whenever handling evidence, wear clean gloves and do not eat, drink or smoke.

Any item of evidence becomes an 'exhibit' of the person taking it and is given a specific 'exhibit number' when being packaged and labelled.

List all exhibits on a chain-of-evidence form (as shown on reverse).

Keep packaged evidence in locked storage in the ED until collected by police (or SARC, if available).

What to collect

- Both 'early evidence' samples if at all possible.
- Any sanitary towels, condoms, panty liners or chewing gum.
- Any temporary wound dressings, initial swabs from the cleaning of each wound and swabs used during catheterisation (use saline only).
- Uppermost paper or linen trolley cover.
- Clothes - if they have become unsuitable to wear or if patient requires hospitalisation. If you have to remove them by cutting, avoid damaging evidence bearing areas.
- If client wearing a tampon and they wish to be examined for forensic evidence, advise them that the tampon should stay (in place) and is best removed by the doctor or essential forensic evidence may be lost

Early evidence

Consent

- Use the 'early evidence consent form'.
- Written consent may be omitted initially if patient lacks capacity or is clinically too unstable, but must be obtained later for evidence to be able to stand up in court.
- Patients whose command of English is not sufficient for the necessary discussion require access to a translator before consent can be obtained. (The police will provide one if they are involved.) It is not appropriate to use a friend or family member, as a translator who is not impartial may influence the patient's choices.
- Under-16s who have capacity can consent themselves (assess along Fraser guidelines; formerly known as Gillick competency).

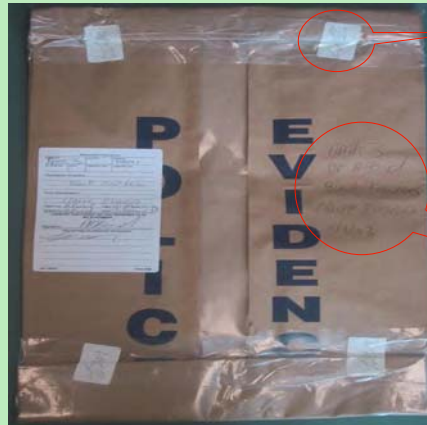
Mouth swab

- Use standard microbiology swab.
- Run swab firmly around the gums at the base of the teeth (both inside and outside), clean the teeth with it, pass it under and over the tongue and finally over the roof of the mouth.
- Seal in police evidence bag (see packaging).
- Store in refrigerator - will keep up to 24h.

If using a commercial 'early evidence kit', read its instructions first

Urine Sample

- Use universal container.
- Reassure patients it will not harm their case if drugs or alcohol are found.
- Whenever possible, patients should take urine sample themselves (no need to supervise them during this). In this case, sample becomes patient's exhibit.
- If catheterisation is necessary to obtain sample, use only saline swabs for cleansing.
- Seal in police evidence bag (see packaging).
- Store in refrigerator - will keep up to 24h.



Packaging

Any items apart from clothes

1. Place each item into a separate **plastic** police evidence bag. Package firearms and ammunition separately; seek police advice.
2. Seal the bag immediately by peeling off the silver strip and sticking it down.
3. Label bag as shown (see bottom left).

Clothes

1. Empty pockets. Place each item of clothing into its separate **paper** police evidence bag (but put any wet / blood soaked item inside an open plastic police evidence bag first).
2. Hold seal away from your face and expel air from bag; close bag by folding top twice.
3. Sign two signature seals & place over fold.
4. Wrap 2-inch sellotape around fold to form an airtight seal. Any potential for leakage must be eliminated - especially at the corners; go right to the edge of the bag.
5. Fold bottom of bag once (or twice if your model has blue tabs) and repeat steps 3-4.
6. Complete & affix a label (see bottom right).
7. Finally (in case the label might come off) write exhibit number, date, taken by, description of exhibit and patient name again directly onto the bag.

Damp exhibits can be stored in refrigerator for < 24h. Contact police if clothes are soaked.

Plastic police evidence bag

Labelling

1. The initials of the person taking the item of evidence form the first part of the number, e.g. first exhibit of Dr. Joe F Bloggs = JFB/1. Always use three letters. If you have no middle name, use the first two letters of your first name, e.g. JOB/1. Number your exhibits sequentially, e.g. JOB/1, JOB/2 etc.
2. E.g. 'white T-shirt' or 'tampon'.
3. State place of packaging and patient name, e.g. 'A&E St. Elsewhere Hospital / John Doe'.
4. If possible, BOTH should be completed by the SAME person. Add time & date.
5. Signature of person taking exhibit.
6. Any person handling the exhibit after it has been taken - including the one sealing the bag - must add their signature here.

Ignore all other sections (for police use only).

Label for paper police evidence bag