

Detailed Instruction Outline for Adult/Adolescent Forensic Sexual Assault Examination

These instructions are meant to serve as a guide for examiners completing forensic exams on sexual assault patients. As with any medical procedure, it is important that examiners tailor the exam to suit the circumstances reported by the patient. Important things to remember:

- Medical issues and treatment always take priority over forensic exam evidence collection. If patient needs immediate treatment for physical injury this should be done first.
- If patient reports circumstances that indicate assault could have been drug facilitated, collect blood and urine samples immediately.
- Patient has the right to refuse any or all parts of the exam at any time.
- Patient has the right to have an advocate present during the exam.
- The exam is free regardless of whether or not the patient is pursuing criminal charges against the offender although the patient may be responsible for medications and additional healthcare costs.
- Document findings clearly using legible handwriting.
- Label all collection bags and envelopes clearly and throw out any unused collection bags and/or envelopes.
- If additional collection envelopes are needed, open another unused kit and add as necessary or use new paper bags and envelopes from facility.
- Maintain chain of custody at all times.
- If at any time the examiner believes that the patient has an injury that requires immediate medical attention, stop the exam and call the attending physician.
- Copies of the Adult Sexual Assault Protocol for the Initial Forensic Physical Examination that is published by the Office of the Attorney General can be found at [http://myfloridalegal.com/webfiles.nsf/WF/JFAO-77TKCT/\\$file/ACSP.pdf](http://myfloridalegal.com/webfiles.nsf/WF/JFAO-77TKCT/$file/ACSP.pdf)
- Fill out all information completely.
- Place line through any space for which you have no information.
- If more space is needed to document findings, note it on the form and attach extra sheets of paper.

General Information and Consent and Release - Retain this Form and Do Not Forward to Law Enforcement or Crime Lab

Consent

- Patients have the right to refuse any and/or all parts of the exam.
- Examiners must have signed consent from victim or authorized parent/guardian. If the victim is unable to consent due to being incapacitated examiner may not commence with the exam without a court order.
- The patient can choose to be a reporter or a non-reporter. Consult with local

law enforcement to find out the policies and procedures for non-reporting evidence storage.

- Examiner can sign as witness.

Medical History and Treatment and Follow-Up - Retain this Form and Do Not Forward to Law Enforcement or Crime Lab

Treatment

- Discuss and provide STI treatment and prophylaxis as well as emergency contraception after thorough explanation and understanding of medical history and per accepted standards of care.
- If available, schedule follow-up medical treatment appointment and provide appropriate referrals.

Forensic Examination Page 01 – Provide Copies of this Form and Retain a Copy for Medical Facility

- If the patient reports a detail that does is not listed as one of the options on the paperwork provided, either note it in the assault circumstances text box on the top of page two or add an additional sheet of paper and document it.

Forensic Examination Page 02 - Provide Copies of this Form and Retain a Copy for Medical Facility

Assault Circumstances

- Report circumstances regarding the assault in victim's words. For example, patient states "....."

Clothing

- A pharmaceutical fold is used when the examiner needs to collect small pieces of trace evidence and they do not have a small evidence container to put them in. See diagram at the end of this document for instructions on how to make a pharmaceutical fold. Put the entire fold into a paper evidence bag.
- Label all bags properly. Extra paper bags may be needed. Unused paper bags will work fine.
- Be sure all items are dried as much as possible before packaging. If items are not allowed to fully dry because of time constraints, notify law enforcement officer retrieving evidence which items remain are wet and need to be dried.
- All envelopes should be sealed with evidence tape – never use saliva to seal an envelope. Initial over evidence tape seal with pen.
- Underwear should be placed in individual evidence envelope provided.

Forensic Examination Page 03 - Provide Copies of this Form and Retain a Copy for Medical Facility

- Examiner should inspect patient's body from head to toe (including scalp, face, back, chest, legs, and feet).
- Examiners should provide detailed descriptions of any injuries found including point tenderness.
- Note injuries found on diagrams provided and include descriptions in notes area. Add additional pages for notes as necessary.

Forensic Examination Page 04 - Provide Copies of this Form and Retain a Copy for Medical Facility

- Oral swabs are taken in the case of oral assault. They should be taken before collecting the buccal swab.
- The buccal swab(s) should be taken last and only after the patient has thoroughly rinsed his/her mouth and waited 15 minutes.
- Dried secretions/stains should be collected using swabs slightly moistened with sterile, deionized water, wet secretions/stains do not need to have swabs pre-moistened.
- Fingernail scrapings can be taken by moistening a sterile swab and gently rolling the swab under each finger. One swab can be used for the left hand and another can be used for the right hand. Package left and right hand fingernail swabs separately.
- Patient may assist examiner in oral swab collection by rolling back lips to show mouth injuries, etc.

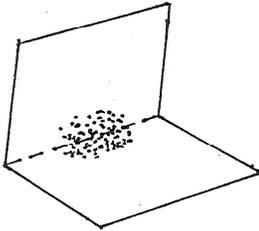
Forensic Examination Page 05 - Provide Copies of this Form and Retain a Copy for Medical Facility

- When photographing injury, be sure that the background is clear of unnecessary items, that there is a clear reference (for example use a ruler) and that the photos have good lighting and are not blurry.
- Pubic areas should be combed. Patient's hair should not be plucked. If a there is a visible amount of material matted in the hair, a sample can be cut out.
- Vaginal swabs should be taken from vaginal vault. Cervical swabs should be taken directly from the cervix.
- Swabs should never be inserted into the anus. Anal folds should be swabbed if anal assault is indicated by patient.
- Patient may be asked to pull back foreskin of penis to be inspected when appropriate.
- Toluidine blue dye can be used to help examiner visualize small cuts and abrasions on genital areas. The dye does stain and should only be used when examiner finds it necessary.

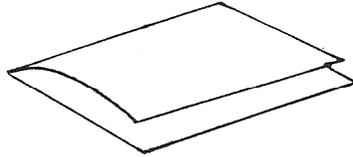
Forensic Examination Page 06 - Provide Copies of this Form and Retain a Copy for Medical Facility

- Crime scene photographers may be called in to take photographs of injuries on patient (with the exception of genital areas – these photos should be taken by examiners only) or of other evidence.

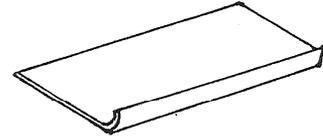
The Pharmaceutical Fold



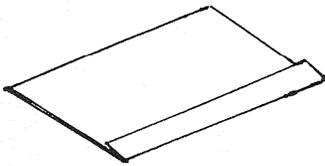
1. Place sample in the center of the paper



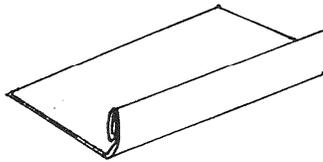
2. Carefully fold the paper in half



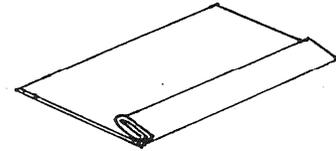
3. Fold both free ends over



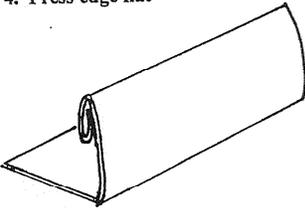
4. Press edge flat



5. Secure by making a second fold



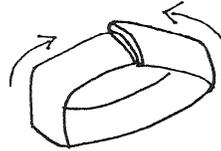
6. Press double fold flat



7. Fold in half



8. Press flat



9. Tuck ends into each other and press flat
Label with case #, exhibit #, contents, and date
Seal with clear tape

