What to Expect **During** a SAFE Exam



You're not alone. The

Confidential Advocate (CA) can
be with you during the entire
process to offer support and help
advocate for your needs

Getting to the exam

We recommend going to Santa Clara Valley Medical Center for your SAFE exam.

Arriving at the hospital

SAFE exams occur in the advocacy center. After arriving at Valley Med, enter through the Emergency Department and ask security to see a "Safe Nurse".

Student











During the exam

Before the exam

It makes sense if this feels overwhelming right now. These emotions, while intense, won't last forever. In the meantime, it's more than okay to reach for what brings you a sense of grounding—whether that's putting on music, writing out your thoughts, calling someone you trust. You don't have to face this alone. The **CA** is here to support you every step of the way and can be with you throughout the process as your advocate. If you need a little extra time before your exam, that's okay. Taking 20 minutes for yourself is a valid and healthy choice.

There are several ways you can connect to receive accompaniment from the **CA**:

- 1. You can contact the **CA** on your own by email apezzoni@scu.edu
- 2. Contact Student Medical Services M-F, 9-5 (408) 554-4501
- 3. After hours or weekends, contact Campus Safety Services and asked to speak with the CA, the CA will be notified

The CA can meet you at SCU and go in an Uber/Lyft with you or can contact an Uber/Lyft on your behalf (it is recommended to bring a friend with this option). Additionally, a YWCA medical advocate will also be available to you throughout the exam, but you do not have to utilize this option if you don't want to.

If there are any physical injuries, they will likely treat these prior to the SAFE exam. From there, you will be taken to a private waiting room while waiting for the SAFE Nurse to arrive. The SAFE nurse may talk about the exam and go through initial paperwork in the waiting room, but they may also take you to the advocacy center and provide that information at that point.

Remember: You are in charge of what this process looks like. You may decline to consent to any aspect of the exam.

First, the nurse will likely ask for a verbal account of what happened so they know where to look for the evidence collection. Samples may be taken from your mouth, anal and/or vaginal cavity, penis and/or scrotum, fingernails, and any other areas where evidence could be found. They will then document and/or photograph any injuries, including those in the genital areas. They will also likely ask about any recent consensual sex to rule out DNA left behind. Lastly, they may perform a toxicology kit and test for STIs. At this time, they may also ask for a pregnancy test and provide you with emergency contraception. You may also ask for Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) to help prevent HIV. If you are still wearing the clothes from the experience or if you haven't washed them yet, the nurse will take the clothes for evidence collection.

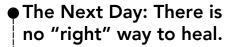
About the exam

These exams can take 2–8 hours. You are in control the entire time - you can ask for breaks, skip any part, or stop the exam whenever you choose. The nurse conducting the exam has received specialized training and chose to do this work. They are there to care for you, and they will move at your pace. Some questions may feel personal. They're asked to ensure your safety and to guide care or evidence collection, if that's something you want. You never have to answer anything that feels uncomfortable. You can always ask why something is being asked or done.

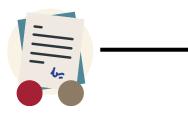
What to Expect **After** a SAFE Exam

Arriving back home

It's completely valid to feel a wide range of emotions: drained, sad, numb, scared, tired, relieved, or anything else. However you're feeling right now is okay. There's no "right" or "wrong" response.



What matters most is that you decide what feels right for you next.





Following the exam, they will provide you with a Sexual Assault Forensic Exam Kit number. This is the number that you can use to track your kit through Track-Kit. They will also discuss follow-up plans with you. This can include repeat STI exams, prescriptions for PEP and/or emergency contraception, as well as follow-up for any injuries. Toxicology reports can take around 12 weeks to become available and you can access the results by entering your SAFE Kit ID into

kitstatus.doj.ca.gov

This is a time to care for yourself in whatever way feels most comforting and authentically you. That might mean changing into cozy clothes, watching a familiar show or movie, eating something you enjoy, taking a nap, journaling, reading, or doing something creative. If it feels right, spending time with friends, chosen family, or a trusted community can also be a powerful way to care for yourself. Healing doesn't have to happen alone. Whether you want quiet time or connection, this is your time. You deserve space, support, and care.

And remember, you can always reach out to the **CA** if you'd like to talk or explore what's next. We're here for you.

If meeting with the **CA** feels helpful, we can schedule that. If going to class feels right, you can do that. If you're worried about missing class, an advocate can help support you with communication to your faculty, we're here to make that easier. If staying in bed is what you need today, that's okay too.

And if you're not sure what to do right now, that's completely okay. Just give us a call, and we'll figure it out together.

You are not alone. You matter, your experience matters.