

Information for professionals: timescales for immediate medical care

Timescales for immediate medical care

The following information has been published to assist professionals who may see an individual who has experienced rape or sexual assault.

The information is correct at 08/07/19 and is based on information published by The Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine (<https://fflm.ac.uk>)

The Bridge can provide information and advice 24/7, 365 days a year. Please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Forensic Timescales

Adults (18+)

Type of penetration	Forensic Window
Digital Penetration	2 days / 48 hours
Oral Penetration	2 days / 48 hours
Anal Penetration	3 days / 72 hours
Vaginal Penetration	7 days / 168 hours

- Skin swabs can be taken up to 48 hours after an assault, to recover body fluids from skin – however, this can be extended to 168 hours if the person has not washed or showered
- Penile swabs can be taken up to 72 hours after an assault
- Blood can be taken up to 72 hours after an assault
- Urine can be taken up to 120 hours after an assault – however, urine can be taken up to 14 days if the incident is a suspected drug facilitated sexual assault

Children (0-18)

The Bridge will see all children up to 7 days following an allegation or suspicion of sexual assault, regardless of the type of incident.

Forensic timescales vary on the type of assault and whether or not the child is pre-pubertal or post-pubertal, however it will be the decision of the Paediatric Sexual Offences Medicine Specialist which forensic samples to take.

For all children under 18 who have experienced a recent sexual assault, please contact The Bridge and an expert will be able to provide advice, information and support.

Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)

A risk assessment for HIV should be conducted within 72 hours of assault.

HIV Prophylaxis (HIV PEPSE) may be indicated following a risk assessment and this must be commenced within 72 hours of exposure in order to be effective.

The Bridge can carry out a risk assessment for all clients who attend our service. However, if a client chooses not to attend or cannot attend within the 72 hour window, they should be directed to 111, Sexual Health / GUM Clinic or their nearest A&E Department.

For further information and advice, please contact The Bridge.

Emergency Contraception

There are three types of emergency contraception available.

The Bridge can carry out a risk assessment for all clients who attend our service and provide emergency contraception if it is indicated. However, if a client chooses not to attend or cannot attend within the relevant time window, they should be directed to 111, Sexual Health / GUM Clinic, Pharmacy, GP, Urgent Care Centre or A&E Department.

For further information and advice, please contact The Bridge.

You can contact The Bridge for information and advice 24/7, 365 days a year, by calling:

0117 342 6999