

Section: Division of Nursing  
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\* **PROTOCOL** \*  
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HACKETTSTOWN REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Originator: D. Racke, RN  
Reviewed by: Elizabeth Fitzgerald RN CCRN, BSN

ED  
(Scope)

**TITLE: SUSPECTED SEXUAL ABUSE OF A MINOR UNDER THE AGE OF 18**

**PURPOSE:** To provide a standard of care that the emergency department personnel can follow when caring for a minor under the age of 18 with suspected sexual assault.

**SUPPORTIVE DATA:** To ensure a victim centered approach.  
Provide the victim with professional treatment and maintain confidentiality  
Provide emotional support to victim and family

**DEFINITION:** A Minor or caregiver report there has been or may have been abuse. Difficulty in walking or sitting. Torn, stained or bloody underclothing. Pain, discharge or itching in the genital area. Bruises or bleeding on external genitalia, vaginal, anal or oral cavities.

**CONTENT: PROCEDURE:**

1. Any minor or caretaker reporting a suspected sexual assault will be triaged per protocol 7010.029b
2. Document exactly what the minor or caretaker states. **Do not** ask details or probing questions regarding the suspected assault.
3. Escort the victim and caretaker to a private examination room (Room 8 or 9 if available).
2. Notify registration personnel for bedside registration.
3. Conduct an external examination only with the emergency department physician. Do not assess the victim or ask the victim to repeat the details of the event twice. Ideally, the emergency department physician and the RN should examine the patient simultaneously, in order to minimize exposure and maintain the dignity and privacy of the minor. You may be directed to perform a more extensive examination under the direction of DYFS or Hackensack Medical Center's Regional Diagnostic Center.

**KEY POINTS:**

Children are especially vulnerable to suggestion.

**Do not** contact the Prosecutors Office or the Police unless Specifically instructed to do so by DYFS.

Note: If the victim's current clothing was worn during the assault, have the victim undress on top of a white sheet spread out onto the floor. Leave the clothes wrapped up in the sheet and place them both in a brown paper bag for possible evidence collection at a later date. Paper bags are located in the SANE cabinet in room 4. The key to the cabinet is located in the emergency department Pyxis. If the law enforcement is not available or present in the emergency department at this time, seal the paper bag with tape, place your initials on it and lock the bag in the SANE cabinet. Notify the police that possible forensic evidence was obtained from the victim. Provide replacement clothing for the victim. If the assault occurred immediately prior to arrival to the emergency department, if possible, avoid allowing the victim to eat drink, shower or urinate until evaluated by the emergency department physician.

4. Call referral to Warren County DYFS regardless of the victim's county of residence. DYFS will provide additional instructions.

**Additional Information:**

DARRC	(908) 453-4121 Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm (908) 475-8408 Twenty-four hour hotline (908) 453-4181 Twenty-four hour hotline
Hackensack Medical Center Regional Diagnostic Center Children's House* Hackensack, NJ	(201) 996-2271 (973) 591-8491 after-hours beeper
Warren County DYFS	(908) 689-7000 Monday – Friday (800) 792-8610 Nights and Weekends

**\*Note:** There is a physician on-call for the Children's House and is available to answer questions or provide guidance on examinations or other related topics.

1. In cases of suspected abuse occurring within the last 72 hours, hospital personnel may receive direction regarding the transfer of the child for counsel and examination.
2. In cases occurring more than 72 hours ago DYFS may present documentation requesting the child be placed on administrative hold for up to (3) business days pending investigation and possible court appearance.
3. If a child is placed on an administrative hold, notify the on-call social worker. The social worker along with the nursing supervisor and administrator on-call will coordinate the specifics of the hold.