

## Getting Help If You've Been Sexually Assaulted - Raped

Written by HealthyPlace.com Staff Writer

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*Find out what to do after being sexually assaulted and where sexual assault victims can turn for help.*

### What do I do if I've been sexually assaulted?

[Take steps right away](#) if you've been sexually assaulted.

- Get away from the attacker to a safe place as fast as you can. Then call 911 or the police.
- [Call a friend](#) or family member you trust. You also can call a crisis center or a hotline to talk with a counselor. One hotline is the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE (4673). Feelings of shame, guilt, fear, and shock are normal. It is important to get counseling from a trusted professional.
- Do not wash, comb, or clean any part of your body. Do not change clothes if possible, so the hospital staff can collect evidence. Do not touch or change anything at the scene of the assault.
- Go to your nearest hospital emergency room as soon as possible. You need to be examined, treated for any injuries, and screened for possible sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or pregnancy. The doctor will collect evidence using a rape kit for fibers, hairs, saliva, semen, or clothing that the attacker may have left behind.
- {loadposition articleAdRight}You or the hospital staff can call the police from the emergency room to file a report.
- Ask the hospital staff about possible [support groups](#) you can attend right away.

### Where can I turn to for help after being sexually assaulted?

If you were sexually assaulted and are experiencing symptoms that are distressing to you, or symptoms that are interfering with your ability to live a fulfilling and productive life, we urge you to talk to a mental-health professional. Depending on the nature of the problems that you are having, a number of therapeutic techniques may be extremely helpful to you.

The treatment you receive will depend on the symptoms you are experiencing and will be tailored to your needs. Some therapies involve talking about and making sense of the assault in order to reduce the memories and pain associated with the assault. Attending therapy may also involve learning skills to cope with the symptoms associated with the assault. Finally, therapy can help survivors restore meaning to their lives.

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Unfortunately, sexual assault is fairly prevalent in our society today. Survivors of sexual assault can experience a wide variety of symptoms, but they do not have to suffer in silence. Mental-health professionals can offer a number of effective treatments tailored to the individual woman's needs. We urge you to seek help today.

### Where else can I go for help?

If you are sexually assaulted, it is not your fault. Don't be afraid to ask for help or support. Help is available. You can call these organizations:

- National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or 1-800-787-3224 (TDD)
- National Sexual Assault Hotline 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

There are many organizations and hotlines in every state and territory. These crisis centers and agencies work hard to stop assaults and help victims. You can find contact information for these organizations at <http://www.womenshealth.gov/violence/state/> . You also can obtain the numbers of shelters, counseling services, and legal assistance in your phone book.

### Sources:

The National Women's Health Information Center  
National Center for PTSD

next: [Sexual Assault of Men](#)