

ADVICE IN CASE OF RAPE

The following guidelines, draw from the Zazi¹ material aims to provide basic advice for rape survivors – regardless of gender, age or sexual orientation – on what they should do and the help they should seek. It is important that help is sought immediately or as soon as possible after the rape.

Get to a safe place. Tell someone you trust. You will need support and the person may be called to give evidence in court, so explain what happened:

- Do not wash yourself or throw away your clothes. There might be hair, blood or semen on your body or clothes that can be used as evidence to convict your attacker. Keep the clothes wrapped in newspaper, not a plastic bag, which can damage the evidence. Keep the toilet paper if you go to the toilet because it may contain evidence. Let it dry and put it in an envelope or paper bag – not a plastic bag.
- Try not to eat or drink until you have seen a doctor.
- Go to the nearest hospital, clinic or Thuthuzela Care Centre.
- It is best to go to a hospital or clinic as soon as possible. Do not wait longer than 72 hours. The doctor needs to collect blood and semen samples from your body before you bath or shower in case you want to lay a charge. This is forensic evidence that will be used to prosecute the rapist. The doctor will write his report on a J88 form, which is used in court. Make two copies of the J88 form after the doctor has filled it out. One is for the police, the other for yourself.
- You are at risk of getting HIV and STIs, and possibly pregnancy. Ask for medicine, known as PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis), to protect yourself from all of these. These medicines, which must be taken within 72 hours of the rape, include:
 1. The Morning after Pill (MAP) or Emergency Contraceptive Pill - these pills prevent pregnancy
 2. Antiretroviral treatment (ARVs) to prevent HIV infection. You will have to take tablets every day for 28 days.
 3. Antibiotics to prevent Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

While at the health facility, also ask for the number of a local counselling service to give you support.

The police station

You have the right to lay a charge if you chose to. The police cannot tell you whether or not it is correct to lay a charge. Ask for the station commander if you feel that the police on the charge desk are not listening to you. The police should take you to a private room and you can request a female officer.

You have the right to report the rape at any police station, no matter where the rape took place. If you can get to the police station close to where the incident took place, the police may have a better chance of gathering the evidence and catching the perpetrator.

You can report the rape up to 20 years after it occurred, but the sooner you report the better chance the police have to gather the evidence and arrest the perpetrator.

Tell the police if you fear revenge or intimidation and ask that the rapist/s is not allowed out on bail. Write down the case number and the name and number of the police officer in charge of your case. Ask for a copy of your police statement. The police must put your case number on the J88 form, then stamp and sign it and give it to you.

Remember: Rape is never your fault. If you were drunk or on drugs at the time of the rape don't let that stop you from reporting the matter or getting medical treatment. Being intoxicated is not a crime. Rape is.

¹ In consultation and with appreciation to ZAZI