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Medical Examination in Child Protection Cases



It is hoped that this leaflet will help to answer some of the questions you may have about your medical examination.

Why have a medical examination?

Most importantly this can make sure that your body is healthy and undamaged. It also gives the doctor a chance to arrange treatment for any problems she may find.

The examination gives you a chance to ask the doctor and the nurse any questions you may have about your body and what has happened to you.

The doctor may see something that will help social workers or the police to take steps to protect you in future.

Can I refuse an examination?

Yes, you have a right to refuse the examination if you wish. The doctor will understand that you may not want to be seen but it is important for you if you feel able to.

(Doctors understand how frightening this might be for you. This is one of the reasons why you have been given this leaflet).

You can ask the doctor to stop the examination at any time.

When will the examination take place?

Whenever possible the examination will take place at a time arranged to suit you and your family or carers. Usually this does not happen immediately but in some cases the police may need the examination to be done urgently.

Where will the examination take place?

The examination usually takes place in a special room at a place called the Shores in Bournemouth. The room is totally private.

The doctor may use some special equipment. One piece of equipment often used is called a colposcope. This is a special camera with a light attached to it. If you agree, the doctor can use this to take pictures of your bottom area. (Although this can be embarrassing and upsetting it does not hurt. The pictures are stored safely and will not have your name on them). Whilst this is being done you can look at the screen if you want to see what the doctor is doing.

The pictures may be needed to avoid another examination; they may help the police, social workers and doctors to protect you in the future.

You can refuse to have the pictures taken if you want to.

Who will carry out the examination?

The children's doctor who does these examinations is specially trained and has lots of experience of seeing children / young people who have been sexually abused. You may be able to choose whether you see a male or female doctor. (However in urgent cases this choice may not be available). In some cases you will be seen by a specially trained nurse rather than a doctor.

Who else will be there?

This is up to you. You can choose whether your parent, friend, carer or social worker is with you. At the Shores there are special workers to support you if you would like them to. The doctor will usually have another doctor with her. If you want to see the doctor on your own for part or all of the examination just ask.

What will happen?

Most importantly this is a general examination of you as a person. We will weigh you and check how tall you are. If you can manage it we will ask you to pass urine (wee) into a pot so that we can check that everything is ok.

After this the doctor will talk to you and you will have a chance to ask anything you want to about what has happened.



The doctor will not ask all the questions that the police and social worker asked you. The doctor will need to know more about what may or may not have happened to your body. She will ask you to explain when these things happened.

The doctor will tell you about the examination and explain what she is going to do. She will show you the equipment that she will use and tell you what you need to do.

The doctor will examine your throat, ears; listen to your chest (so you will have to take some clothes off!). She will feel your tummy and check your arms and legs.

You will be able to put your top clothes back on again and then take off your jeans, tights, pants or whatever so that the doctor can carry out the last bit of the examination.

She will ask you to lie on the bed with a blanket over you. You can have someone sit next to you all the time if you want. The doctor will need to look at your bottom.

If you are a boy the doctor will need to look at your penis and testes while you are lying on your back.

If you are a girl you will need to open your legs as wide as possible with your knees bent. The doctor will touch the outside of your private parts (vulva) and gently part the bits of your skin, called labia, around the opening to your vagina.

The next bit is just looking and maybe taking some pictures with the colposcope.

The doctor may occasionally need to take samples to make sure that you do not have any infections (these are easily treated). For girls, the way the doctor does this is to place a small swab (like a cotton bud) gently inside the vaginal opening and a second one on the outside. Most children / young people find this the worst part of the examination but doctors know this and are very careful.

Finally the doctor will ask you to turn on your left side and curl your knees up to your chest. She will then gently separate the cheeks of your bottom and have a careful look at your bottom for about a minute. This may seem like a long time but it is important for the doctor to do the examination properly so that it doesn't have to be repeated. Again some photographs may be necessary.

That's it! You can get up and get dressed.

Will the examination hurt?

Children and young people tell us that taking the swab may hurt. It only takes a few seconds and does not hurt afterwards.

Will I have to be examined again?

Again this is your choice. The doctor will offer you a follow-up appointment if you need one – so you can talk about any worries you have. She will only suggest another examination of your bottom area if this is needed to make sure that any injuries are healing properly. In most children / young people we do not see any injuries.

After the examination you may want to talk to someone about it. This could be your GP or social worker or the doctor who examined you.

Here are some telephone numbers:

- **The Shores, Dorset SARC** (01202) 552056
- **Child Protection Office:** 01305 254748 (Dorset County Hospital)
01202 448312 (Poole Hospital)
- **NSPCC:** Freephone 0808 8005000
- **Childline:** Freephone 0800 1111