

What is sexual abuse or assault?

Sexual abuse or assault is a crime that involves any sexual contact that happens without your consent. It can range from childhood abuse to indecent assault and rape.

Contact with people experienced in sexual abuse and assault care can be the first step in self-care helping you to regain control and begin the healing journey.

How do people react when they have been sexually abused or assaulted?

This varies greatly. Some are tearful and distressed, others appear normal and behave as if nothing has happened, others may feel numb and disorientated. Some blame themselves and don't tell anyone and try to pretend it didn't happen.

The doctors and nurses in the SAATS service are able to offer a supportive and safe environment to begin the healing process no matter when it happened.

Our service provides:

- Patients needing urgent sexual assault examinations, including forensic cases, are seen 24 hours, 7 days a week after discussion with the on-call doctor. Non-urgent patients, including historic sexual abuse and follow-up visits are seen during office hours, usually at the weekly Sexual Harm Assessment outpatient clinic.
- A weekly outpatient clinic (in Dunedin) for historic sexual abuse and follow up after recent acute examinations

- Ongoing medical care and support if needed
- Referrals to support agencies including accessing ACC-funded counselling
- Free access to all, including visitors to NZ, by specially trained doctors and nurses.

Do the Police have to be involved?

You do not have to report sexual abuse or assault to the police to access this service. Talking to the police and their specialist sexual abuse team can be helpful in deciding what you want to do, but does not mean you have to make a formal complaint. Most importantly, you should have advice and support

Who can refer to the SAATS Service?

You can refer yourself or go via the police, Oranga Tamariki, Ocase (formerly Rape Crisis), hospital emergency departments, sexual health clinic, public health nurses, your general practitioner (GP) or mental health services.

If you have recently been sexually assaulted and think you may want the Police involved, what should you do?

Talk to the police who will arrange an examination with the local SAATS team as soon as possible.

DO NOT:

- Change your clothes
- Brush your teeth
- Go to the toilet
- Wash or shower
- If possible, don't eat, drink or smoke.

I have been sexually assaulted or assaulted but don't have any injuries. Is it worth still having an examination?

Yes – taking control of the process is your first step to recovery. 80% of those sexually assaulted have no injuries – this does not mean the assault is less traumatic or didn't happen.

An examination gathers evidence for the police. It also enables treatment to be arranged for any injuries and provides testing and treatment for any sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy. It allows planning for follow up care and counselling.

Even if the abuse occurred a long time ago, you can seek help via the Sexual Harm Assessment Clinic, run weekly. Call 0800 114 411.

What if I am unsure whether to involve the Police?

An examination to collect forensic evidence needs to be done within 7 days. The forensic evidence is then kept for 6 months while you decide if you want the Police to be involved. Talk to the Police or the SAATS team for advice – we call these "just in case" examinations.



Who can I talk to?

Support organisations:

- Safe To Talk, 24 hour helpline: 0800 044 334
- NZ Police, Call 111 if urgent
- Ocaso Dunedin (Otepoti Collective against Sexual Abuse, previously Rape Crisis). 03 474 1592. support@ocaso.org.nz
- Southland Help, Invercargill: 03 218 4357. contact@southlandhelp.nz
- Jigsaw Central Lakes (Queenstown) 0508 440 255
- ACC Counsellors, listed on the ACC website or call the ACC's Sensitive Claims unit: 0800 735 566
- Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse Aotearoa NZ: 03 425 8018. info@mso.nz
- Need To Talk. Free Call or text 1737
- Shakti Ethnic Women's Support Group: 0800 742 584

Our service organisations:

Dunedin Sexual Health Clinic

Ground Floor, Dunedin Hospital 0800 742 546 (8.30am – 5pm, Mon – Fri). Urgent cases access via Police, Emergency Dept, Dunedin Hospital.

Sexual Harm Assessment Clinic Dunedin (Historic cases) 0800 114 411 (Tues afternoon clinics) at Dunedin Sexual Health Clinic.

Invercargill SAATS

Accessed via Invercargill Police, Southland Hospital outpatients.

Queenstown Medical Centre

Accessed via Queenstown Police.

Dunedin and Invercargill Children's Service:

Paediatrics outpatients at Dunedin Hospital and Invercargill Hospital, access via the Police.

Contact Us:

southernhealth.nz

contactus@southerndhb.govt.nz

03 474 0999

Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand
Southern

Southern Sexual Abuse Assessment and Treatment Service

A free and confidential medical service for those who have been sexually assaulted or abused recently or in the past.



Providing sexual abuse care for people of all ages from Waitaki to Stewart Island.