

Forensic Nursing Service - Fraser Health

# Connecting to Follow-Up



This booklet and more information is available online at  
[www.fraserhealth.ca/connect](http://www.fraserhealth.ca/connect)





# Health Care Response to Violence

Violence can impact a person's health and well-being for a short time and over a long period. Finding supports and resources can help. You are not alone.

## Forensic Nursing Service

If you have any questions about the care you received from the Forensic Nursing Service, please contact our office.

For questions about your follow up medical care or test results, please contact Embrace Clinic.

### How to contact

Call (non-urgent office lines)  
Abbotsford Regional Hospital:  
604-851-4700 ext. 646147

Surrey Memorial Hospital:  
604-953-4723

Email:  
[forensicnursingservice@fraserhealth.ca](mailto:forensicnursingservice@fraserhealth.ca)

[fraserhealth.ca/forensicnursing](https://fraserhealth.ca/forensicnursing)



## Embrace Clinic

Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

A special medical clinic of the Forensic Nursing Service for survivors of recent violence.

### How to contact

Call or text: 604-807-5406

Email: [embraceclinic@fraserhealth.ca](mailto:embraceclinic@fraserhealth.ca)

[fraserhealth.ca/embraceclinic](https://fraserhealth.ca/embraceclinic)



## Strangulation Clinic

A special clinic within Embrace Clinic for those who have been recently strangled.

[fraserhealth.ca/strangulationclinic](https://fraserhealth.ca/strangulationclinic)



## Surrey Mobile Assault Response Team (SMART)

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

For people of all genders who have experienced recent physical or sexual violence.

Offers support services over the phone and in person.

Helps people get medical care, police response, and social services.

Run by the Surrey Women's Centre.

### How to contact

Call: 604-583-1295

[surreywomenscentre.ca/smart](https://surreywomenscentre.ca/smart)



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## Forensic Nursing Service

(Medical - Forensic Exam)

### The word “forensic” means legal.

A **medical-forensic exam** is when a forensic nurse does a medical exam, collects samples, and documents anything seen that could be used as evidence in a police investigation. Possible evidence might include the history and details of the incident, drawings, swabs, blood, urine, photographs, and other things seen or collected.

Check out our video

*“Forensic Nursing Service”*



[fraserhealth.ca/connect](https://fraserhealth.ca/connect)

At the hospital, the forensic nurse offered you 3 options. Here are those options and what each included.

	Medical Care	Forensic Exam
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess and treat injuries</li><li>• Give medications to treat or prevent infection</li><li>• Do medical tests</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Examine head to toe</li><li>• Collect forensic samples</li><li>• Take photos</li><li>• Document findings</li></ul>
Medical Care No Forensic Exam	✓	
Medical Care Forensic Exam Samples kept	✓	✓ Samples kept at the hospital for 1 year Written report kept forever
Medical Care Forensic Exam Reported	✓	✓ Samples and written report given to police

### Will the forensic nurse be able to tell what happened to me?

A medical-forensic exam will not be able to tell exactly what might have happened to you. The forensic nurse would have offered you care to help you feel safe, and to keep you healthy. They might have also done a forensic exam which can include writing down what you said, what they saw and maybe collecting samples (evidence) if you decide to report to police.

### How will I find out the results of the medical-forensic exam?

During your medical-forensic exam, the forensic nurse might have collected 2 types of samples.

1. **Medical samples** are for health reasons. These go to the hospital lab. Results are available from Embrace Clinic.
2. **Forensic samples** are for legal reasons. These go to the police when you make a report to the police about the incident. These samples are not tested at the hospital before giving them to the police. Police might test them as part of their investigation.

### How is my personal information protected?

We collect, protect, use, and share your personal information according to the laws in British Columbia. The only people who are allowed to look at your personal information are those who need to know it so they can provide you with safe and appropriate care and services. There are situations where, by law, we must release your personal information to services not related to your health care, such as when responding to a court order.

### What if photos are taken?

At the hospital, the forensic nurse might have offered you the chance to have photos taken. If taken, the photos will be kept by Fraser Health forever in a secure place.



The photos could be shared with other professionals for medical or legal purposes.

- Encrypted copies of photos taken during the medical-forensic exam can be shared with police if you report the incident to police and you give us permission.
- The police might submit the photos as evidence.
- The photos might then be viewed by other police, by lawyers, by the judge, by the jury (if there is one), by those in the courtroom, and by the accused.



## After Your Hospital Visit Embrace Clinic

The Forensic Nursing Service has a special medical clinic called Embrace Clinic.

If you agree to it during your hospital visit, Embrace Clinic will contact you within 72 hours of being seen by a forensic nurse. The nurse practitioners at Embrace Clinic will offer you a medical follow-up visit in person or over the phone.

### Services offered:

- Answer questions about your hospital visit.
- Review medical test results.
- Treat injuries including head and strangulation injuries.
- Treat impact on sleep and emotions.
- Test for pregnancy and review options.
- Test for sexually transmitted infections and offer treatment.
- Provide emergency contraception medicine or IUD.
- Help plan for return to school or work.
- Describe and document injuries for medical and legal reports.
- Connect to community support services.

**Note:** Embrace Clinic is not a crisis or counselling service.

### How to contact

Call or text: 604-807-5406

Email:

[embraceclinic@fraserhealth.ca](mailto:embraceclinic@fraserhealth.ca)

Clinic hours:

Monday to Friday

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Clinic location: Across the street  
from Surrey Memorial Hospital

Appointments:

in person or by phone - same  
business day or next day  
times are usually available



[fraserhealth.ca/embraceclinic](http://fraserhealth.ca/embraceclinic)



## Strangulation Clinic

Embrace Clinic offers a special clinic for those who have been recently strangled.

As well as the main clinic services, the clinic offers focused assessment of the head and neck, and referrals to specialists as needed.



[fraserhealth.ca/strangulationclinic](https://fraserhealth.ca/strangulationclinic)

Check out our videos for more information about head injury and strangulation on our webpage, [Fraserhealth.ca/connect](https://Fraserhealth.ca/connect).

## Other sexual health services

Embrace Clinic also offers some specific sexual health services to any person. They do not have to be victims of violence. These services are booked as the clinic schedule allows.

Sexual health services offered:

- Insert IUDs and birth control implants.
- Provide services for different pregnancy options.
- Test for and treat people, and their sexual partner(s), who have or are at high risk for a sexually transmitted infection.



**This booklet can include private information.  
Keep it somewhere safe and secure.**



## Mental and Emotional Wellness

Everyone reacts to violence differently. The sooner you can talk about your experience in a supportive environment with others, the quicker you might begin a healthy healing process. People you could talk to could be family, friends, or professionals.

### You might feel:

- shame
- self blame
- disbelief
- anger
- powerless
- anxious
- scared

All of these feelings are normal. Getting care and support from someone you trust is important. You do not have to do this alone. Help is available.

You might experience flashbacks, feeling jumpy, difficulty concentrating, difficulty sleeping, and mood swings. These might last a short time, or come back in the future. An incident in your life might trigger a relapse if you are living with substance use or mental health challenges. Now is an important time to seek help. Embrace Clinic can help you and refer you to specialty services.

**If you feel like hurting yourself, contact a crisis line or call 9-1-1**

## Crisis Lines:

- **1-877-820-7444 or 604-951-8855 (Fraser Health Crisis Line)**  
Immediate, free, and anonymous emotional support, crisis intervention and community resource information 24/7.
- **1-800-563-0808 (VictimLinkBC)**  
For people who have experienced crime and want crisis support and resource information.
- **9-8-8 (National Suicide Crisis Helpline)**  
For people who are or know someone who is thinking about suicide.
- **1-800-SUICIDE / 1-800-784-2433 (BC Suicide Prevention Line)**  
For people who are or know someone having thoughts about suicide.
- **310-6789 no area code needed (BC Mental Health Support Line)**  
For people who would like emotional support and resources specific to mental health in B.C.

## Support Services when not in crisis:

- **Embrace Clinic**
- **Your regular family doctor or nurse practitioner**
- **Any Urgent Care Centre**
- **SMART 604-583-1295**
- **bc211** - Information and access to community, government, and social services. **Call 2-1-1**
- Some workplaces have **Employee and Family Assistance Programs**. Talk with a supervisor or human resources at work to see if services are available to you.
- You might be able to get counselling through your local victim service office. **VictimLinkBC** can help you find the office near you.
- **Crime Victim Assistance Programs (CVAP)** helps victims, immediate family members of victims, and witnesses affected by violent crime.



## Caring For Injuries

**Embrace Clinic is available for medical needs that are not urgent.**

**For after-hours or urgent care, go to your local Urgent Care Centre or an Emergency Department near you.**

Check out our videos

*"Caring for general injuries"*

*"Head injury"*

*"Strangulation"*



[fraserhealth.ca/connect](https://fraserhealth.ca/connect)

### General body aches, soreness, and bruises

General body aches, soreness, and bruises might get worse over the next few days. Bruises can show up a few days after the incident and take up to 6 weeks to go away fully. Continue to move your body. It might help to soak in a warm bath with Epsom salts.

If you can, take ibuprofen (such as Advil™) as directed on the bottle. Pain medicine can change how other medicines work. If you do take other medicines, check to see if pain medicine will affect how they work.

- Speak with your local pharmacist.
- Call 8-1-1 to speak to a nurse or pharmacist

### Cuts and scrapes

Any time you have open areas in your skin, there is a chance they could get infected. Keep the area clean, dry, and covered with a gauze or bandage.

Contact a doctor, nurse practitioner, or Embrace Clinic in these situations:

- You had stitches and you are not sure when or if they need to be taken out.
- You think you might have an infection.

### Signs of Infection

- |            |             |         |
|------------|-------------|---------|
| - redness  | - more pain | - puss  |
| - swelling | - warmth    | - fever |

## Genital and anal injuries

- **Sores, blisters, or rash on your genitals or anus**

If you get sores, bumps, blisters or a rash, contact a doctor, nurse practitioner, or Embrace Clinic. Do not try to pop any bumps or blisters. Do not put any cream on the area. These can be signs of an infection that might need to be treated.

- **Vaginal bleeding**

You might have some vaginal bleeding after a sexual assault. If you are not already on your period, the bleeding should be only a small amount and it should stop within 24 hours. If you took an emergency contraceptive pill (such as Plan B™), your period might be early or late. If you are concerned about the amount of vaginal bleeding you are having, contact a doctor, nurse practitioner, or Embrace Clinic.

- **Vaginal burning, itching, and discomfort**

It might help to sit in a warm bath with Epsom salts. Do not scrub the area or douche. Only use soaps with no scent on your genitals. Keep your genital area clean and dry. If you notice discharge that is not normal for you and does not go away in a few days, or if you have any other concerns, see a doctor or nurse practitioner, or call Embrace Clinic.

- **Penis and testicle discomfort**

It might help to sit in a warm bath with Epsom salts. Do not scrub the area. Only use soaps with no scent on your genitals. Keep your genital area clean and dry. If you notice unusual discharge, it hurts to ejaculate or pee, or you have other concerns, contact a doctor, nurse practitioner, or Embrace Clinic.

- **Hurts to pee**

Try to drink lots of fluid without caffeine. If you have blood in your pee, lower back pain, a fever, cannot pee, or it hurts to pee for more than a day, contact a doctor, nurse practitioner, or Embrace Clinic.

- **Anal pain and discomfort**

Bowel movements (pooping) might hurt for a few days. Drink lots of fluids without caffeine. Eat more high fibre foods such as grains, vegetables, and fruits. You might have a little bit of bleeding on your underwear or when you wipe. Usually, this is okay. If bleeding is more than this or you are worried about it, contact a doctor, nurse practitioner, or Embrace Clinic.

## Signs of brain injury

These signs can be caused by a hit to the head or from being or from being strangled:

- dizziness
- mood swings
- trouble concentrating
- headaches
- sensitivity to light
- feel like you are in a “fog”
- trouble sleeping
- or sound
- feel sad, depressed, or anxious
- blurry vision
- ringing in the ears
- change in your voice
- sore throat
- trouble swallowing
- neck pain
- memory problems

Talk to a health care provider if you have any of these signs after a head injury or strangulation

## Head injury (concussion)

When you were at the hospital, you might have been told you have a head or brain injury (concussion). Injury to the brain can happen after a hit or jolt to the head. You might have passed out. It is common to feel ‘foggy’, confused, or have trouble remembering details from the time of the injury (amnesia). Most people with mild head injuries recover well.

If you have any of the signs listed below, you might have a head injury. It is important to get medical care. Medical care will help you recover fully.

## Strangulation (“choked”)

Serious problems can happen right away, or even days to weeks after being strangled. Sometimes when people are strangled, they pass out, have a bowel movement (poo), urinate (pee), or vomit (throw up). You might see broken blood vessels in your eyes or mouth. All of these are signs that your life was at risk and that there might be more serious injuries to your throat, neck, or brain. Being strangled can cause injury to the brain with symptoms similar to a concussion or hit to your head.



### Did you know?

**Being strangled by a partner increases the risk for being killed by that partner in the future.**

If you were strangled by a partner, talk to someone who can help you stay safe. SMART, VictimLinkBC, and Embrace Clinic can help. Embrace Clinic has a special Strangulation Clinic that can help with the medical care after being strangled.

## Recovery from head injury and strangulation

What you feel now usually gets better with time and rest. A health care provider, such as at Embrace Clinic, can help you recover more quickly.

Some things you can do to recover:

- **Rest and sleep**

Rest both your body and brain. Night time sleep is very important (see the section on Sleep after Trauma). Try to do only one big activity a day, such as grocery shop, medical appointment, or police interview.

- **Screen time**

It is very hard on your brain after a head injury to use your phone to text or look online. You might find that using a phone screen, TV, computer or tablet makes you feel worse. Try to use your screens as little as possible.

- **Driving**

You should not start driving again until you feel much better and are able to concentrate normally.

- **Alcohol, marijuana, sleeping pills, and other drugs**

Try not to drink alcohol, use marijuana, sleeping pills, or take other non-prescription drugs right now. These can make you feel worse and also make it harder for others to tell whether the head injury is affecting you or not.

- **Pain Control**

For headache pain, take acetaminophen (such as Tylenol™) or ibuprofen (such as Advil™). Ask your pharmacist or Embrace Clinic how much is the right amount for you.

For a sore throat, drink warm fluids and eat foods that are easy to swallow.

For bruises or swollen areas, put ice over the area for up to 15 minutes at a time.

- **Support**

Having help with caring for children and taking a short time off from school or work can allow you to rest and recover. Embrace Clinic can help with medical notes and planning for safe return to school and work, and with a referral to a concussion clinic. .

Check our Concussion Services pages for more on recovering from a head injury.



[fraserhealth.ca/concussion](https://fraserhealth.ca/concussion)



## Sleep After Trauma

You might find that it is harder for you to fall asleep or stay asleep since the incident. This is normal. Usually, sleep will get better over time. To help your body heal, you need night time sleep. You also need sleep to help you cope with all the things that are going on. It is common to have nightmares and or weird dreams.

Talking with a counsellor during this time can be helpful. They can help you learn healthy ways to cope and ways to relax so you can sleep.

### Things to help with sleep:

- **Turn off all screens at least 1 hour before bedtime.**

This is important for your body's natural sleep hormones to work properly.

- Do something that calms you before bedtime.

Some activities that might help you relax without a screen:

- yoga
- meditation
- audiobook/podcast
- music
- knitting, crocheting
- books, magazines
- puzzles
- a bath or shower
- playing an instrument
- drawing, painting
- colouring books
- writing

- Go to bed at your normal time. If you are not at all sleepy in 20 minutes, get out of bed and do a relaxing activity (but nothing with a screen). When you feel a little sleepy, try to go back to bed again. Continue the 20 minute cycle as often as you need.
- Use your bed only for sleeping right now. This helps teach your body and brain that the bed is for sleeping and not thinking.
- Get up and out of bed at the same time each day, even if you did not sleep well.
- Try not to nap during the day.
- If your thoughts are racing when you are trying to sleep, turn on talk radio, an audiobook, or a podcast. Set the sleep timer so that it turns off after you are asleep.



### **Things to help with sleep** *(continued)*:

- Do not drink alcohol or use marijuana to help you sleep. This kind of sleep is not as restful.
- Try not to have caffeine within 4 hours of bedtime, including coffee, black or green tea, chocolate, and energy drinks. Drink herbal tea, water, warm milk or have a light snack before bedtime.
- Check with a health care provider or Embrace Clinic before starting any sleep medicines. Melatonin often does not help sleep issues caused by trauma.

Sometimes sleep problems can be a sign of other health problems. If you have tried many of these things and you are still finding it hard to fall asleep or stay asleep, contact a doctor, nurse practitioner, or Embrace Clinic.

### **Medicines to help with sleep**

Most medicines you get at a pharmacy that help people sleep should be used for only a short time. Your body can start to need medicine to sleep and it can be hard to stop using them. Sometimes after a difficult time, we need some medicine to help us though. Talk to your doctor, nurse practitioner, or Embrace Clinic about medicines that might be best for you.

### **Other ways to help with sleep**

If the incident happened in your bedroom or home, here are some things to try:

- Redecorate within your budget.
- Move the furniture around to create a new look and feel.
- Get new sheets, pillowcases, and blankets.
- Paint the walls a new colour or hang new pictures.

These changes do not need to cost a lot of money. Look at thrift stores for pictures, sheets, and blankets.



## Medical Tests

At the hospital, medical tests and imaging such as x-rays or a CT scan, might have been done. If any results are a concern, Embrace Clinic, or Emergency Department will contact you.

### Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

It takes time for the germs causing these infections to grow enough to be measured on a test. If you had STI testing at the hospital, it is not likely to show any STI from the recent incident. If you are concerned about getting an infection from the recent incident, we recommend getting tested again in about 6 weeks. Most STI testing can be done without the need for a genital exam. If you notice anything you are concerned about, a health care provider might suggest a genital exam.

You can get STI testing at Embrace Clinic or a clinic of your choice.

### Pap and HPV Test (cervical cancer screening)

During your hospital visit, the forensic nurse might have done a pap or HPV test if you were due for one. If the forensic nurse did this test, Embrace Clinic will contact you if the results are not normal.

**Note:** A pelvic exam done with a speculum (the tool the nurse might have placed into the vaginal canal to see your cervix) is **not** the same as a pap test. If you are not sure if the nurse also did a pap test, contact Embrace Clinic.

### Pregnancy Testing

During your hospital visit, the forensic nurse might have asked you for a urine (pee) sample to test for pregnancy. Pregnancy tests are not accurate until at least 14 days after your last sexual contact. This means that a pregnancy test can read as not pregnant (negative) when an early pregnancy is starting. If you took any form of emergency contraception, your chances of becoming pregnant from the recent incident are lower. If you do not have a period or monthly bleed within 3 weeks, you might want to take a pregnancy test. You can get free pregnancy testing done at Embrace Clinic.

## Drug Screening

There are 3 general types of drug screening:

- 1) **Hospital Drug Screen** – For medical purposes only. Helps the medical team give the correct care for the situation, such as when someone overdoses. This testing is done with urine or blood. The medical team decides if this type of testing is needed.
- 2) **Provincial Toxicology Lab Drug Screen** – For medical purposes only. Detects smaller amounts of drugs that might be in your urine. It can take up to 6 weeks for results.
- 3) **Forensic Toxicology Screen** – For legal purposes. Blood and urine samples can be collected during the medical-forensic exam. These samples are not tested at the hospital. Police are responsible for the testing of forensic samples based on the investigation.

### Things you need to know about drug screening:

- Drug screening is not always an option because of timing and testing limits.
- The presence or absence of drugs does not prove or disprove that an assault or sexual assault took place. Neither can it prove or disprove that a drug was taken knowingly or unknowingly.
- You do not need to know the results of a drug screen to make a report to police. It is okay to report to police even if you do not know what happened.
- It is common for drugs not to be found.
- If drugs are not found, it does not mean that you were not drugged. It only means that the test could not find drugs. Many things can affect drug screening:
  - type of drug(s) and the amount
  - time between taking the drug and collecting your samples
  - the number of times you have peed
  - eating or drinking and taking other medicines or drugs
  - how well your liver and kidneys work
  - your general health
  - your age, weight, ethnicity, and gender
- You cannot choose which drugs to look for in a drug screen. This means that drugs, alcohol, and some medicines that you have knowingly used could also be found in your drug screen.
- Medical drug screening results will become part of your medical record.

**You know yourself best.**

**Trust your instincts and do not rely on drug screening results.**



## Preventing Pregnancy

- **Risk of pregnancy after sexual assault**

The chance of you becoming pregnant after a sexual assault is the same as it is with consensual sex.

You are less likely to become pregnant just before and during your period or monthly bleed. You are more likely to become pregnant in the 2 weeks after the start of your period or monthly bleed.

You might have taken an emergency contraception pill after the sexual assault. It is important to know that taking this pill is not 100% effective. There is still a chance of a pregnancy.

- **Emergency contraception**

There are a few options for preventing pregnancy after an unprotected act of sexual contact. All of the methods are safe. Emergency contraception is not a form of abortion. It works to prevent a pregnancy from happening. There are a number of different types of emergency contraception. Some are more effective than others. Contact Embrace Clinic for more information.

For more information about your choices for emergency contraception, see the resources section on our website:



[fraserhealth.ca/connect](https://fraserhealth.ca/connect)

- **Pregnancy from sexual assault**

If you become pregnant from a sexual assault, Embrace Clinic can talk with you about your options and help you get the services that are right for you.



**This booklet can include private information.  
Keep it somewhere safe and secure.**

# Infections and Diseases



## Antibiotics

You might have been given some of these medicines. If you have allergies, you might have been given different ones from those described here. If you have questions about the medicines you were given, contact Embrace Clinic.

Medication	Azithromycin	Cefixime	Ceftriaxone
What it is for	Treat and prevent chlamydia and gonorrhea	Treat and prevent gonorrhea	Treat and prevent gonorrhea
How to take it	1 or 2 grams as a single dose  Take by mouth with food	800mg as a single dose  Take by mouth with food	250mg injected into a muscle, mixed with numbing medicine (lidocaine) to reduce pain
Possible side effects	Diarrhea, upset stomach, throw up, stomach pain	Diarrhea, upset stomach, throw up, stomach pain, headache, dizziness	Skin rash, diarrhea
Notes:	Call Embrace Clinic if you throw up the medicine within 1 hour of taking it.	Call Embrace Clinic if you throw up the medicine within 1 hour of taking it.	Nurse usually injects the medicine into the muscle in your hip.

These medicines are safe for people who are pregnant or are breastfeeding / chestfeeding.

## Vaccines

During your hospital visit, you might have been offered certain vaccines. These are the 2 most common vaccines the forensic nurse gives:

Vaccine	Hepatitis B Vaccine	Tetanus-diphtheria (Td) Vaccine
What it is for	Protects against Hepatitis B infection, a sexually transmitted infection	Protects against 2 diseases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tetanus, also known as lock jaw, can enter an open wound in your skin.</li><li>• Diphtheria is a serious infection of the nose and throat and can cause serious breathing problems.</li></ul>
How it is given	Injected into your arm	
Possible side effects	Usually a sore arm or redness where the needle went in	
Notes:	Part of regular vaccines given to children in B.C.	Part of regular vaccines given to children in B.C. Boosters needed every 5 to 10 years for life.

If you need more doses of these vaccines or the Emergency doctor or forensic nurse recommended other vaccines, you have options for where to get them:

- Embrace Clinic
- Your local public health unit

## Anti-HIV medicines (HIV PEP)

You might be concerned about getting HIV (human immunodeficiency virus). The chances of getting HIV from a sexual assault is very low.

Your risk for HIV will have been assessed during your hospital visit.

If a risk was noted, medications called HIV post-exposure prophylaxis or PEP might have been suggested. The word “prophylaxis” means to prevent or control the spread of an infection. Experts do not recommend this treatment if the chances of being exposed to the virus is low or if it has been more than 72 hours since being exposed.

There are a few things you need to know.

- You will have had blood taken at the hospital. We do this to make sure you do not already have HIV and that your kidneys are working well.
- You get a 5 day starter kit of HIV PEP medicines.
- You need to take a total of 28 days of HIV PEP medicines.
- Embrace Clinic arranges for the remaining 23 days of HIV PEP medicines for you and oversees your treatment.
- You should be tested for HIV at 3 weeks, 6 weeks, and 3 months after you finish all 28 days of medicine. Embrace Clinic can arrange this for you.

**Important:** It can take up to 3 days to get these medicines. Regular pharmacies do not have them in stock.

Embrace Clinic contacts you to arrange the remaining 23 days supply. It is important that you follow up so you do not miss any doses.

If you stop taking HIV PEP medicines before the full 28 days, it will not work.

Along with the starter kit, the forensic nurse gives you a factsheet about taking the medicine, called “Taking HIV PEP”.

### Resources for taking HIV PEP

Contact Embrace Clinic at 604-807-5406:

- To get the rest of your HIV PEP medicine.
- To follow-up on blood test results.
- To talk about any unwanted side effects or reactions.
- If you have questions about HIV, testing, or the HIV PEP medicines.

Go to  
[patienteduc.  
fraserhealth.ca](http://patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca)  
 for the  
[Taking HIV PEP](#)  
 factsheet



Contact St. Paul's Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy at 1-888-511-6222 if you have questions about the medicines or taking HIV PEP with other medicines.



## Pregnancy

If you experience violence when you are pregnant, it increases the chances of injury to the unborn baby, a miscarriage, a stillbirth, or a low birth weight when baby is born. If you know you are pregnant, see your pregnancy care provider so they can check your baby. Strangulation and other injuries can seriously harm you and your baby.

Get medical care right away if any of the following happen:

- the baby stops moving
- you have cramping or contractions
- there is bleeding from your vagina
- there is any abnormal fluid leaking from your vagina

### Things you can do to help keep you and your baby safe:

- If you do not have a doctor or midwife overseeing your pregnancy, you can contact Embrace Clinic to help connect you with pregnancy care providers.
- Make a plan to stay safe, whether you choose to stay or leave the relationship.

### Pregnancy does not prevent violence in relationships

- It is not likely that a pregnancy or adding a baby to your relationship will make your partner stop hurting you.
- Even if your partner seems to react well to the news of your pregnancy, there is no promise that they will not hurt you or the baby in the future.
- Pregnancy and a new baby can cause a lot of stress in any relationship. It can be a trigger for violence.



## Your Safety



**Call 9-1-1 if you are in danger or fear for your safety or the safety of others.**

### Police

If you are not in immediate danger and would like to talk with police, you can call a non-emergency police phone number.

### Victim Services

VictimLinkBC is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You can call or text 1-800-563-0808, or you can email [VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca](mailto:VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca).

VictimLinkBC offers immediate crisis support and referral services to all victims of crime.

**SMART is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.  
Call 604-583-1295.**

They can help you get medical care, make a police report, make a plan for your safety, and find a safe place to stay.



### Did you know?

**You can talk with police and Victim Services about court orders that can help keep you and your loved ones safe.**

## Leaving a violent partner

A person is at highest risk for being hurt or killed by a violent partner when they are trying to leave the relationship. Making a plan for your safety before you leave can help. SMART is available to help with safety planning. Call 604-583-1295, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Things you might want to do:

- Have a person you can check in with each day.
- Have a bank account in your name that only you can access. Keep emergency money in it.
- Keep a photocopy or take a photo of important documents for you and your children. Keep them somewhere safe, such as a safety deposit box or at a trusted friend's house.
- Keep a copy of any protection orders or no-contact orders with you.
- Put together a "grab and go" bag and keep it with a trusted person or in a safe place.
- Have an extra set of house and car keys. Keep them in a safe place.
- Have an alternative safe place to go to.
- Keep a diary or record of any violent incidents with date, time, threats, witnesses, and a description of what happened.
- Take screen shots of abusive or threatening messages. Write down the date and time.
- Let neighbours and landlord know of your safety needs and ask them to call police if they hear angry noises.
- Change the locks if you are staying in your home. Restrict window access. Consider having an alarm system installed.
- Change your routine, go to different stores, and bank locations.
- Change online passwords. Close your social media accounts or change the passwords. Remove or block people you do not know and trust.
- Do not put information online about where you are. Turn off location settings on your devices.
- Block phone numbers of people you do not want to contact you.
- Put important numbers in your phone such as police, friends, and supports. Crisis numbers can be added to your phone as "Aunt Jane" instead of "Victim Services".

## Children's Safety



If your child is also being hurt, or was hurt during an incident when you were hurt, please tell the Emergency Department staff and forensic nurse. Your child might be offered follow up by a specialist in children's health. This experience makes it more likely for your child to have mental and physical health problems in the future.



If your child calls 9-1-1 during an incident that scares them, they might feel silly or guilty once the situation settles down.


Things you can do to help your child:

- Reassure your child that they did a very brave thing to keep the family safe.
- Tell your child it is okay to yell if they are in danger.
- Tell the daycare and school who is allowed to pick up your child and who is not allowed.
- Tell the daycare or school about any safety concerns and create a safety plan.
- Consider legal help as soon as possible for custody issues.
- Consider counselling for your child if they experience a situation of violence, or if you see changes in behaviour, language, or how they express fear.

The Child, Family, and Community Service Act of B.C. requires that anyone who has reason to believe that a child or youth might be abused or neglected, and that the parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child or youth, must report it to a child welfare worker. This includes all adults who are residents of B.C., not only teachers and medical professionals.

## Resources

Ministry of Child and Family Development's focus is to support children and youth in B.C. to live in safe, healthy, and nurturing families, and to be strongly connected to their communities and culture. If you think a child or youth is being abused or neglected, call the **Provincial Centralized Screening line: 1-800-663-9122** (available 24 hours a day).

- Xyólheméylh (Fraser Valley Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society) provides culturally appropriate and holistic services to the Indigenous children, youth, and their families who live throughout the Stó:lō Territory.  [fvacfss.ca](http://fvacfss.ca)
- Fraser Health's HEAL Clinic accepts referrals from the above organizations as well as from healthcare providers and police. The clinic offers services to children who might have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or who might have experienced neglect. Services include a health and body check-up, an examination of injuries, screening for normal growth and development, and resources to help the child and family cope with the situation.



This booklet can include private information.  
Keep it somewhere safe and secure.

## Working With Police



It can be difficult to decide whether or not to report a crime. There are services to support you while you make a decision that is right for you.

- **SMART** 604-583-1295
- **VictimLinkBC** 1-800-563-0808

### How to report to police

First, make sure you are safe. **Call 9-1-1 if you need help right away.**

Once you are safe:

- Call the non-emergency phone number for the city where the incident happened.
- If you are not sure where it happened, call your local police department.
- If it happened in another province or country, call your local police department.

### Local non-emergency police phone numbers:

<b>Abbotsford</b>	1-800-898-6111	<b>New Westminster</b>	604-525-5411
<b>Burnaby</b>	604-646-9999	<b>North Vancouver</b>	604-985-1311
<b>Chilliwack</b>	604-792-4611	<b>Port Moody</b>	604-461-3456
<b>Coquitlam</b>	604-945-1550	<b>Richmond</b>	604-278-1212
<b>Delta</b>	604-946-4411	<b>Surrey</b>	604-599-0502
<b>Langley</b>	604-532-3200	<b>Vancouver</b>	604-717-3321
<b>Maple Ridge</b>	604-463-6251	<b>West Vancouver</b>	604-925-7300
<b>Mission</b>	604-826-7161	<b>White Rock</b>	778-593-3600

## What does 'reporting to police' mean?

When you report a crime to police, they will ask you for your personal information and details about what happened. They will open an investigation and ask you to make a statement (also known as a police interview). This can happen at the police station or other safe location and might be audio or video recorded.

Police will ask questions. Some questions might make you feel uncomfortable or make you wonder why you are being asked. It is important to tell the truth and be as accurate as you can. Your statement becomes part of the evidence. It is okay to say "I don't know" or "I cannot remember" when you don't know or can't remember.

You can have someone go with you when you talk to police but they might not be allowed to be with you when you give your statement. They can stay nearby for support before and after.

If you want help making a police report, contact either of these services:

- **SMART** 604-583-1295
- **VictimLinkBC** 1-800-563-0808

## When should I report?

There is no time limit in B.C. on reporting serious crimes. The sooner a report is made, the sooner the police can begin to investigate, collect evidence, and get statements from witnesses. Your memory of the incident might change over time.



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## What happens after I report to police?

Reporting to police does not always mean that charges will be laid or that you will go to court. After you report, police will review the information and decide on next steps.

If the police decide to continue to investigate, they will collect more information from you, from witnesses, and from other sources as needed. They will try to find evidence.

If police decide there is enough evidence to support a criminal charge, they will submit a “Report to Crown Counsel” and recommend that charges be laid. Crown counsel decides whether or not to lay charges. Not all charges recommended by police are approved by Crown counsel. See the section on Working with Crown counsel for more information.

If you reported to the police the name of the person who hurt you, the police usually contact that person after you have given your statement. You can ask police if they will tell you when the person has been contacted. Think about a safety plan for yourself and for those who matter to you if you are worried and the person knows where you live, work, or go to school.

It might take awhile before the investigating officer updates you about the case. Any time you have questions about the case, you can contact the investigating officer (or any Victim Services agency you might be working with). It is good to remember that the investigating officer could work shifts (4 days on, and 4 days off) and it might take time for them to call you back.

## What if I want to report anonymously?

**Crime Stoppers** can take information about a crime without asking for your personal information.

Two ways to contact **Crime Stoppers**:

- **Call the tip line**  
1-800-222-TIPS (1-800-222-8477)
- Complete and submit a secure and encrypted online tip form



[bccrimestoppers.com](http://bccrimestoppers.com)

### Can a third party report on my behalf?

Third party reporting is when a community-based Victim Service Program reports on your behalf.

Third party reporting is available in B.C. to adults (19 years and older) who have experienced a sexual offence and want to share information with police.

The victim service worker will collect details about the incident, and report it to police without giving them your personal information. The third party can act as a go-between for police to get more information from you if needed.

If you are interested in third party reporting or want to know more:

- **SMART** 604-583-1295
- **VictimLinkBC** 1-800-563-0808

Go to the  
B.C. Government  
website ([gov.bc.ca](http://gov.bc.ca))  
for more about:

[Third Party  
Reporting for Victims  
of Sexual Offences](#)





## Victim Services



Victim service workers are trained to help survivors manage the impact of violence. They can:

- Help you talk with police and investigating officers.
- Talk with you about safety concerns, safety plans, and protection orders.
- Help you apply for benefits from the Crime Victim Assistance Program.
- Help you understand what happens in court, support and guide you through the court process, help you prepare for court, and go to court with you.
- Help you understand and deal with your emotions and other effects of the incident.
- Get information for you about the status of the offender in custody.

To connect with Victim Services:

- **SMART** 604-583-1295
- **VictimLinkBC** 1-800-563-0808
- If you are working with police, they might have their own **Victim Services Program** they can connect you with.



## Working With Crown Counsel

Crown counsel are lawyers assigned to cases by the Attorney General of B.C. Crown counsel does not represent you or the police, they represent the community. In Canada, a crime against a person is considered a crime against society.

Crown counsel reviews all reports they get from police. They make sure the legal process is fair to all, and the justice process is followed. They follow specific guidelines when deciding to charge a person with a criminal offence.

Crown counsel must make sure the case is strong enough to present in court. If it is, then Crown counsel must decide if the case is in the public interest. They look at many things to decide this, such as how serious the allegations are.

After their assessment, Crown counsel can decide:

- if charges should be laid or not
- if an option other than court is more appropriate

Go to the  
B.C. Government website ([gov.bc.ca](http://gov.bc.ca)) for more about:

[How the Criminal Justice System Works](#)



[If You Are a Victim of Crime](#)



[Laying Charges](#)



## Working With a Private Lawyer



You can choose to work with a private lawyer. Speak with Victim Services to understand your legal rights and responsibilities.

- **SMART** 604-583-1295
- **VictimLinkBC** 1-800-563-0808

Some Legal Support Services:

- **B.C. Lawyer Referral Service** 1-800-663-1919  
To get in touch with a lawyer.
- **Legal Aid BC** 1-866-577-2525  
To see if you qualify for free legal services. They give priority to people with low incomes, with some services available for all British Columbians. Their Family Law in BC website has information about separation and divorce, self-help guides, and court forms. The Aboriginal Legal Aid in B.C. site helps Indigenous peoples understand their legal rights.
- **Dial-A-Law** 1-800-565-5297  
For when you think you might have a legal problem, or want to know your legal rights and responsibilities, or want to better understand the B.C. legal system.

See Resources page - Legal Services for each website.



## Going to Court

### **Not all crimes reported to police will result in going to court.**

If you were the victim of a crime, and the investigation results in Crown laying charges against the accused, you might get called to court to testify as a witness for Crown counsel.

Victim Services can help you understand how the court works and go with you.

- **SMART** 604-583-1295
- **VictimLinkBC** 1-800-563-0808

Police may have their own Victim Service Program they can connect you with.

Go to the B.C. Government website ([gov.bc.ca](http://gov.bc.ca)) for more about going to court

[If You Are a Victim of Crime: The Court Case](#)



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## Resources



## Victim and Social Services

**bc211**

**Call: 2-1-1 Visit: [bc211.ca](https://bc211.ca)**

Free, confidential, multilingual telephone information and referral to a full range of community, government, and social services in B.C.

**Canadian Centre for Child Protection®**

**Visit: [ProtectChildren.ca](https://ProtectChildren.ca)**

Information and services about the safety of children.

**Indigenous Health Liaison or Cultural Advisor**

**Call: 1-866-766-6960**

**Visit: [fraserhealth.ca/indigenous](https://fraserhealth.ca/indigenous)**

**Ministry of Children & Family Development (MCFD)**

**Call: 1-800-663-9122** if you think a child is being abused or neglected.

**Visit: [gov.bc.ca](https://gov.bc.ca)**

Search “Ministries”. Choose *Children & Family Development* Works with several services to support the well-being of children, youth, and families.

**SMART (Surrey Mobile Assault Response Team) at Surrey Women's Centre**

**Call: 604-583-1295**

**Visit: [SurreyWomensCentre.ca/our-programs-SMART](https://SurreyWomensCentre.ca/our-programs-SMART)**

A crisis response team that provides services over the phone and in-person to people who have experienced physical or sexual violence.

**VictimLinkBC**

**1-800-563-0808 Visit: [VictimLinkBC.ca](https://VictimLinkBC.ca)**

Confidential and multilingual information, referrals, and immediate crisis support for all victims of crime across B.C. and the Yukon.



## Health Services

### Concussion Clinic, Fraser Health

**Visit:** [fraserhealth.ca/concussion](https://fraserhealth.ca/concussion)

An early intervention and follow-up service for people living with a recent concussion/mild traumatic injury to the brain. Needs a referral from your doctor or Embrace Clinic.



### Embrace Clinic

Rapid access medical care for survivors of recent violence, follow up after medical-forensic exam. See page ii for more information.

### Fraser Health Virtual Care

Call: 1-800-314-0999

Visit: [fraserhealth.ca/virtualcare](https://fraserhealth.ca/virtualcare)

A safe way to access health information, advice and care. 10:00 am–10:00 pm, 7 days a week.



### HealthLinkBC

**Call: 8-1-1 Visit:** [healthlinkbc.ca](https://healthlinkbc.ca)

Speak to a registered nurse any time of the day or night. Can also speak with a pharmacist or dietitian.



### Options for Sexual Health

**Call: 1-800-SEX-SENSE (1-800-739-7367)**

**Visit:** [optionsforsexualhealth.org](https://optionsforsexualhealth.org)

Offers sexual health care, information, and education. Sells low cost birth control. Clinics across B.C.



### Public Health, Fraser Health — various locations

**Visit:** [fraserhealth.ca](https://fraserhealth.ca) Search “Public Health Unit”  
Services to promote health and wellness in the community.



### Sex and U

**Visit:** [sexandu.ca](https://sexandu.ca)

Information about sexual and reproductive health, such as birth control options and sexually transmitted infections.



## Health Services

### St Paul's Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS

**Call: 1-888-511-6222** to ask questions about HIV PEP medications including side effects and effects of taking with other medicines.

### Urgent and Primary Care Centres (UPCC)

**Visit:** [healthlinkbc.ca](http://healthlinkbc.ca)

Go to *Find a Health Service* then select *Urgent and Primary Care Centres*

There are many urgent and primary care centres in the province. Check online if your community has one near you.

The centres offer urgent and non-emergency care with or without an appointment. They are often open evenings, weekends, and statutory holidays. The centre is for when you might normally go to a family doctor or walk-in clinic for a health concern but can't get in, and it is not an emergency.



### Youth Clinics (ages 22 and younger), Fraser Health — various locations

**Visit:** [fraserhealth.ca](http://fraserhealth.ca) Search "Youth Clinics"

- free birth control
- testing and counselling for pregnancy
- information, testing, and treatment for sexually transmitted infections
- testing and treatment, information and testing for HIV
- supplies for safer injection and smoking
- connections to counsellors
- referrals



## Mental Health and Counselling

### BC Association of Clinical Counsellors

(private pay counselling)

[www.bcacc.ca](http://www.bcacc.ca) – click on “Find a Counsellor” and filter for your preferences.



### Fraser Health Crisis Line

**Call: 1-877-820-7444** or 604-951-8855

Immediate, free and anonymous emotional support, crisis intervention and community resource information available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### Fraser Health

#### Mental Health and Substance Use Services

**Visit:** [fraserhealth.ca](http://fraserhealth.ca) Search “Mental Health”  
Mental Health Urgent Crisis Response Centres are available in some communities. Additional services include Family Support Services, Online Support Services, Indigenous Mental Health Services, Harm Reduction and Overdose Prevention, Child and Youth Mental Health and more.



### Mental Health Support – Crisis Line

**Call: 310-6789** (no area code)

**Visit:** [CrisisLines.bc.ca](http://CrisisLines.bc.ca)

For people who would like emotional support and resources specific to mental health in B.C.



### National Suicide Crisis Helpline

**Call: 9-8-8**

For people thinking about suicide or people who know someone thinking about suicide. Help available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Bilingual.

### Suicide Crisis Line

**Call: 1-800-SUICIDE** (1-800-784-2433)

**Visit:** [CrisisLines.bc.ca](http://CrisisLines.bc.ca)

Call if you are thinking about suicide or are worried about someone who might be.





## Legal Services

### Access Pro Bono

**Call: 1-877-762-6664 Visit: [accessprobono.ca](https://accessprobono.ca)**

Offers free legal services depending on your income level.



### Canadian Bar Association — B.C. Lawyer Referral Service

**Call: 1-800-663-1919**

**Visit: [cba.org](https://cba.org) to Find-a-Lawyer and other services.**



### Crime Stoppers

**Call: 1-800-222-TIPS (1-800-222-8477)**

**Visit: [bccrimestoppers.com](https://bccrimestoppers.com)**

To inform the police about a crime without giving your name or other personal information.



### Dial-A-Law

**Call: 1-800-565-5297**

**Visit: [dialalaw.peopleslawschool.ca](https://dialalaw.peopleslawschool.ca)**

Information on the law in B.C.



### Legal Aid BC • Family Law in BC • Aboriginal Legal Aid in BC

**Call: 1-866-577-2525**

**Visit: [legalaid.bc.ca](https://legalaid.bc.ca)**

**[family.  
legalaid.bc.ca](https://family.legalaid.bc.ca)**

**[aboriginal.  
legalaid.bc.ca](https://aboriginal.legalaid.bc.ca)**



Offers free legal services to those who qualify and helps people understand their legal rights in different situations.

**Government of British Columbia**

[gov.bc.ca](http://gov.bc.ca)

**Information and resources referred to in this booklet include:**

- Keeping Kids Safe from Abuse in B.C.
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- If You Are a Victim of a Crime
- How the Criminal Justice System Works
- The Court Case — Information for Victims
- Victim Services





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**Created by**  
the nurse practitioners and nurses of our  
Embrace Clinic and Forensic Nursing Service

This information does not replace  
the advice given to you by your health care provider.

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