

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ASSAULT**

According to the Department of Justice, up until the year 2001, a rape was committed every five minutes in the United States. Since 2001, the Department of Justice reports a rape is now committed every two minutes in the United States. These startling statistics are scary and unfortunately true. So what should a person do if she/he is raped?

Regardless of whether the rape was committed by an acquaintance or a stranger, the victim should do the following:

Call 911, the police, or local Rape Crisis Center (VOICE 1-800-400-8551)

Do NOT bathe or wash your body

Do NOT change your clothes

Do NOT wash bedding or clothing

Do NOT go to the bathroom

Do NOT eat or drink anything

Do NOT smoke

Do NOT brush your teeth

Do NOT douche

It is important to seek medical attention at a hospital within the first 72 hours of the incident. Although it may be difficult for the victim to make decisions when she/he is upset, it is vital to treat any injuries that may have occurred during the incident. At the hospital, medications such as antibiotics and the Morning After Pill (for female victims) may be offered. Therefore you should bring a trusted friend, counselor or pastor that knows and/or shares your moral views to help you make decisions.

A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) will conduct a rape kit by collecting evidence on the victim's body. If a SANE is not available to conduct the rape kit, you should ask/insist that the proper rape kit procedures be followed. The rape kit can take anywhere from two to six hours to complete. The evidence collected in the rape kit is very important to police in identifying and possibly prosecuting the attacker.

Even if the victim may not be sure if she/he wants to press charges, it is in their best interest to have the rape kit done. If the victim chooses to press charges, the rape kit will then be turned over to the police and sent to a crime lab for DNA analysis.