



# What to Expect

## Parents/Caregivers Guide to Your Child's Medical Evaluation

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**Child Advocacy Center**  
OF AIKEN COUNTY

[www.cacofaiken.org](http://www.cacofaiken.org)  
(803) 644-5100

# What is a Medical Evaluation?

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After your child's forensic interview, your investigator may request a medical evaluation. A medical evaluation is a head-to-toe, non-invasive exam that assesses the child's emotional and physical health, while also providing crucial forensic findings that will aid in the investigation of concerns of abuse. All medical services are provided *at no cost to the family*.

All exams are conducted at the CAC of Aiken by a specialized pediatric nurse practitioner in a child-friendly, non-threatening manner.

The purpose of the medical evaluation is:

- To help ensure the health, safety and well-being of your child;
- To diagnose, document and address any medical conditions that were the result of abuse;
- To determine if any medical findings were from abuse or from other medical conditions or by accident;
- To assess the child for any developmental, emotional or behavioral problems needing further evaluations and treatment and make referrals as necessary;
- To reassure the child that they are 'OK' and 'Normal'.
- To educate the non-offending caregiver(s) regarding the health of their child



# Preparing for your appointment

The CAC of Aiken's Child Advocate will schedule your child's appointment at a time when our medical provider is in our office. A typical appointment takes about 2 hours. Medical evaluations are a critical part of the investigative process, so it is very important that you come at your scheduled time. IF for some reason you cannot attend please contact us immediately at **(803) 644-5100**.

## **Location:**

Child Advocacy Center of Aiken  
4231 Trolley Line Rd  
Aiken, SC 29801

## **Be sure to:**

- Arrive 15 min early in order to fill out the necessary paperwork including a consent form and child's medical history. If your child is older than 13 years, they will also need to complete a medical history as well.
- A parent or legal guardian must bring the child to their appointment. If this is not possible, let us know so we can get the paperwork completed ahead of time.
- Bring your Medicaid or Insurance card. You will not be responsible for any co-pays or other expenses associated with a medical evaluation.
- Reassure your child that this exam is similar to their regular doctors visit.

***Note: It is our policy that the alleged offender may not bring the child or be on our property at any time.***



# Questions & Answers

## **Why does my child need to have a medical evaluation?**

Medical evaluations at the CAC are critical to the investigative process. Our medical providers are specially trained in the field of child abuse to identify and document any current or past injuries. They also examine your child's overall health and in some cases, test for things like sexually-transmitted infections. Most importantly, they help reassure your child that they are healthy and 'normal'. Finally, our medical provider provides an official report for the investigators.

## **What happens during the medical examination?**

- Once you arrive at our Center, our medical provider will meet with you to review your child's medical history, discuss any concerns and answer any questions you may have about the exam.
- Next our medical provider will call your child back for their exam. The exam is like the physical exam your child gets with their primary care provider, including height & weight; listening to the heart and lungs; and looking in the ears, mouth, and eyes. They will also collect a urine sample from your child.
- In sexual abuse cases, a genital exam will be needed - it is non-invasive where only the outside is examined. The medical provider may use a special camera called a colposcope to look at the genital area. The camera is used to magnify the area and to document the examination so that your child will not have to have another exam.
- After the exam, our medical provider will meet with you again to discuss the results and to answer any questions.



# Questions & Answers

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## ***Can I be in the room with my child during the examination?***

No. We know that this causes a lot of anxiety for parents/caregivers. But like the forensic interview, this is part of the investigation. We find children are actually more comfortable without their caregivers in the room. If at any point during the exam, your child wants you to come in, a member of our medical team will get you.

## ***The abuse happened a long time ago, does my child still need a forensic medical?***

Yes, in some cases there is evidence of past injuries that only our medical providers may be able to discover. In cases where there is no detectable injuries, your child still needs to be reassured that they are healthy and have any questions answered.

## ***My child already had a medical examination. Why does my child need another medical examination?***

Our medical providers have had advanced training in the field of child abuse and working with children. It is like having your child's doctor diagnose a heart murmur and then referring you to a heart doctor for another exam. Our medical providers are specialists who can assist the investigators and social workers in their efforts to protect your child.

## ***Who will have access to my child's photos and video?***

Only the medical team and those involved in the investigation will have access to your child's medical records.



# Questions & Answers

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## ***Will my child be tested for sexually-transmitted infections?***

Yes, if needed. If there is concern that your child was exposed to a sexually-transmitted disease, our medical provider will discuss with you where you need to go to get a blood test. If a sexually-transmitted infection is detected, our medical provider will prescribe antibiotics and make sure your child gets follow-up care.

## ***If there is no evidence or findings, does that mean nothing happened?***

No. Most exams don't show any evidence of injury or abuse. Children heal quickly and some types of abuse don't leave any scars that can be seen on an exam. One of the most important things you can do as a parent/caregiver is to believe your child and protect them from further abuse in the future.

## ***If there is no medical evidence, will that hurt the investigation?***

No. In most cases there is no medical evidence. Our medical provider will provide investigators with a medical report explaining why there are no medical findings. They may also be called to provide court testimony regarding your child's medical examination.

## ***What is the next step?***

Our Center strongly recommends that you consider therapy in order to help your child and family through this very difficult time. Our Center has licensed therapists that specialize in trauma and abuse. Therapy is available to your family at no cost to you. We can also provide you with referrals to therapists in the community. You can talk to our Child Advocate for more information.







## Location

**4231 Trolley Line Rd.  
Aiken, SC 29801**

## Phone

**(803) 644-5100**

## Fax

**(803) 644-7233**

## Website

**[www.cacofaiken.org](http://www.cacofaiken.org)**

