

## Sexual assault of youth & teens

Sexual assault or abuse is when someone:

- touches you sexually when you don't want them to (for example, touching your genitals or breasts)
- makes you touch another person, or yourself, sexually when you don't want to
- does non-touching things, like making you watch sexual behaviour or watching you do sexual behaviour, when you don't want to
- touches you or makes you do something sexual that makes you feel uncomfortable, threatened or scared.

If you have been sexually assaulted it's important to know there are people who want to help you and you don't have to go through this alone.

You may have many different feelings, or maybe you feel numb. Everyone is different so people will react differently. Just remember that there are people here to help.

### I have been sexually assaulted what do I do?

If you have been raped or sexually assaulted, the first thing to do is go somewhere you feel safe, such as the home of a close friend or family member.

If you feel able to, tell someone you trust what has happened. Don't feel ashamed or to blame for what has happened to you – it is not your fault.

You don't have to decide straight away whether you want to make a formal complaint to the police or not. It's OK to take the time you need to decide this.

Whether or not you go to the police or tell anyone else, it's best to go to a doctor as soon as possible. If you live in Canterbury or on the West Coast, you can see the doctors and nurses at the Cambridge Clinic – they specialise in looking after people who have been sexually assaulted. You can see them straight after an assault, or years afterwards if it happened some time ago. Or you can go to your own doctor, or the hospital.

If the assault has just happened, it's best not to wash before going to the doctor, so you can talk about your options. Even if you're not sure about going to the police a Cambridge Clinic doctor may still be able to take samples, just in case you change your mind later.





Just like talking to your own GP, talking to a specialist doctor at the Cambridge Clinic is all confidential. It can also be very important for evidence later if you do decide later to go to the police. If you are under 16, they'll advise you to see a GP, the police, or Child Youth and Family first.

You can also call the police. It's OK to contact them just to ask for advice and to find out what your options are, you do not have to make a formal complaint. The police can also help you and put you in touch with people who can help.

### Supporting a friend

Sometimes people confide in their friends about being sexually assaulted, before they tell anyone else. Sex'n'respect ([www.sexnrespect.co.nz](http://www.sexnrespect.co.nz)) has info about how you can support your friend and help them be safe (go to Take positive action > Stepping up and supporting friends). Gr8Mates ([www.gr8mates.org.nz](http://www.gr8mates.org.nz)) explains different ways that sexual assault can happen, and has lots of advice about how you can support your friend.

**i** Local health professionals recommend the following pages.

- Sex'n'respect ([www.sexnrespect.co.nz](http://www.sexnrespect.co.nz))
  - Effects plus healing ([www.sexnrespect.co.nz/Effects-plus-Healing/](http://www.sexnrespect.co.nz/Effects-plus-Healing/))

Information and advice about the effects of sexual assault, tips for getting through, who to talk to and where to get help.
  - What is consent? ([www.sexnrespect.co.nz/Sex-'n'-Respect/What-is-consent/](http://www.sexnrespect.co.nz/Sex-'n'-Respect/What-is-consent/))

A clear explanation of what it means to consent to sexual activity, and also what is not consent.

### Overseas links

- Love is respect – Power and control wheel ([www.loveisrespect.org/is-this-abuse/power-and-control-wheel/](http://www.loveisrespect.org/is-this-abuse/power-and-control-wheel/))

Use this interactive tool to find out more about different kinds of abuse.

*Written by HealthInfo clinical advisers. March 2016.*