

The Stephanie V. Blank Center for Safe and Healthy Children – What to Expect



The Stephanie V. Blank Center for Safe and Healthy Children provides these services for children or teens who may have been victims of physical or sexual abuse:

- Medical exams
- Counseling
- Forensic interviews - the goal of this is to talk with a child to get facts about what happened. It is done in such a way as to protect the child's feelings as much as possible.
- Behavioral health assessments and counseling

The Center has 2 sites:

- Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Hughes Spalding
- Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Scottish Rite

What happens when we first get there?

When you first get there:

- You will be asked to complete a medical history form for your child.
- You will need to provide your insurance details.

How do I prepare for my child's exam?

There is very little you need to do to prepare for your child's exam.

- Tell your child they will have a head-to-toe checkup by a doctor or nurse practitioner who works with children and teens.
- Before your child's exam, you will meet with members of the Center staff. They can talk with you about the exam and answer your questions.

How does my child prepare?

Your child will meet with a child life specialist and medical assistant. They will:

- Check your child's height, weight, blood pressure and temperature.
- Teach your child about the exam and let them see and touch the equipment.
- Give your child choices of things to do that can help during the exam. This may include:
 - Watching a movie.
 - Looking at a book.
 - Listening to music.
 - Playing a game.
 - Playing on an iPad or tablet.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

What to expect, continued

What happens during the exam?

Your child's exam will be a lot like when they go to the pediatrician or clinic for a checkup. A doctor or nurse practitioner will do the exam.

During the exam:

- They will check your child's whole body – eyes, ears, mouth, stomach and genital area (privates).
- If we are seeing your child for possible sexual abuse, they may do an exam using video camera equipment.
 - The video camera will not touch your child.
 - The doctor or nurse practitioner can see a magnified view of the genital area.
 - It takes detailed, high quality still images and video.
 - If needed, they will use cotton swabs to wipe the area and collect specimens, or samples, for cultures.
 - They will then send the cultures to the lab.
 - The lab will test them for infection or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

The doctor or nurse practitioner will not use a speculum (device to gently open the vagina) to check young girls, and they rarely use one for teens.

- Instead, we carefully check the **outside** of the genital area.
- In most cases, they can distract a child with games, toys or a tablet during this part of the exam. Most children do not find it too stressful.

What happens after the exam?

- The doctor or nurse practitioner will talk with you about the exam results and answer your questions. They will also talk with your child.
- Your child may need a follow-up visit. Be sure to bring your child to all of them. We will work with you to help ensure the well-being of your child.
- You may also get teaching materials or referrals for other services. These are offered to you and your child for more treatment or support.
- The social worker will talk with you if a report must be made to the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) or the police.

What do I tell my child?

You may share these details with your child so they will know what to expect during the visit. Children are more relaxed and cooperate more when they know what to expect.

If you or your child have questions or concerns, please call the Center. Ask to talk with our intake coordinator or family advocate.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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