



# Who ya gonna call?



**Children's**  
Wisconsin

Kids deserve the best.

# Medical Exam Triage for Investigators

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## Disclosure Information for:

# Dr. Judy Guinn and Amanda Didier, MS, CSW

- Learners must attend the entire one-hour session and complete an evaluation to receive contact hours. There will be a code to text confirming attendance. The code and phone number will be displayed at the end of the session.

The nurse planner from Children's Wisconsin Nursing Continuing Professional Development provider unit has reviewed the information and determined that:

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- The content being presented strives to be fair, well-balanced and evidence-based.

# Objectives

To learn the differences in medical and other services at the ED and the CAC.

To help determine at which site the child is best served when child maltreatment is a concern.

To utilize the Medical Decision Making brochure in determining next steps when investigating cases of possible child maltreatment.

# Case

- A CPS report is called in by a school staff stating that a 6yo disclosed that “grandpa touched me where I go pee”, after having a class discussion about “good touch, bad touch”.
- CPS goes to the school and does a minimal facts interview of the child. It is determined that the alleged contact of the child with the grandpa was 2 weeks ago. However, the grandfather lives in the home and helps with cares.
- The child has no physical complaints.
- What to do next? Should the child go to a CAC or the ER for evaluation?

# What is the difference between medical services?

## CAC

- *Child Abuse Pediatrician or specially trained APP performs the sexual abuse medical evaluation and can make medical diagnoses*
- Environment is child friendly and trauma-informed
- Forensic interviewing and advocacy available
- Follow up services like STI and pregnancy testing
- Appointment required

## Emergency Department

- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) performs the medical exam.
- Available 24/7, no appointment required
- Setting is more appropriate for cases requiring immediate medical evaluation or when a CAC is not available

# What makes a CAC different?

- Child friendly atmosphere
- Specially trained staff
- Coordinated services
  - Forensic interviews
  - Medical exams
  - Advocacy
  - Investigators present



# Sexual Abuse

*Every child who is a suspected victim of sexual abuse should be offered an expert medical evaluation preferably at a Child Advocacy Center, including children who do not disclose penetration.*



# When is a sexual abuse medical evaluation indicated?

Child discloses sexual abuse

Another child in the home has an STI

Child has an abnormal anogenital finding that may indicate abuse

Witnessed abuse

Problematic Sexual Behaviors\*



# When should the exam occur?

## Immediate/urgent

- Sexual assault within 120 hours in an adolescent or within 72 in a prepubescent child
- Bleeding
- Pain
- Safety concerns
- Concern for trafficking/child may abscond

## Can wait

- Child is in safe environment
- Lack of symptoms
- Abuse occurred > 120 hours in an adolescent or > 72 hours in a prepubescent child

# What happens during a sexual abuse medical evaluation?

Medical history

General physical exam

Colposcopic exam

- Magnification
- Light source
- Videorecording/Photos

STI  
Testing/Pregnancy  
testing as  
indicated

Sexual assault  
evidence collection  
as indicated

# Sexual Abuse

- **IMMEDIATE SAME-DAY EXAM**
- **Does the child need an immediate exam?**
  - *Choose this option if ANY of the following are true:*
- **Sexual abuse occurred within 72 hours** in prepubertal children and within 120 hours in adolescents
- Child has significant **pain or bleeding**
- **Safety considerations** require urgent medical evaluation
- **Child has another acute medical condition or injury** requiring treatment in an emergency department setting

# Sexual Abuse

- **NON-URGENT EXAM**

- **Can the child be seen at a later date?**

- *Choose this option if ALL of the following are true:*

- **Sexual abuse has occurred outside the window of evidence collection** (within 72-120 hours)
    - **The child is not experiencing pain or bleeding**
    - **The child can be kept safe** until the exam can occur
    - In general, children seen for acute sexual abuse exams at a child advocacy center or in an emergency department **should be seen at a CAC approximately 2 weeks later** for a colposcopic exam, sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing, and/or pregnancy testing.

# Physical Abuse

*A medical evaluation is recommended for children suspected to be victims of physical abuse. This includes children who are exposed to domestic violence, witnessed physical abuse, or other children who reside in the home where physical abuse is suspected to have occurred.*

# Physical Abuse

- Children who are physically abused should have a medical evaluation, ideally **as soon as possible** after the injury occurs, when the injury is the most visible.
- If the injury is **not life-threatening** and does not require repair or further testing, the child can usually be seen at a CAC.
- If a CAC appointment is not available in a timely manner, **photos of the injury can be taken**, ideally by law enforcement or in an emergency department setting, and the CAC medical provider can view the photos when the child is seen for a CAC medical evaluation at a later date.
- Most cases with suspected **head trauma, abdominal trauma, or fractures** will need to be seen in the emergency department where lab tests and imaging can be performed

## Who needs an exam for physical abuse

Disclosure of physical abuse in which injuries may be present

Injuries concerning for physical abuse

Witnessed physical abuse

Siblings/contact children in same home/environment where another child was abused

When  
should a  
physical  
abuse exam  
occur?

Because the diagnosis of physical abuse depends on the presence of injuries, the exam is best performed as soon as possible, while injuries are present.

If abuse is discovered after injuries have evolved or healed, photos of initial appearance of injuries are helpful in the determination of abuse.



# Where should I go for a PA Exam?

- **CAC**

- Skin injuries (bruises, abrasions, lacerations not requiring stitches, etc.)
- Superficial smaller burns
- Siblings/contacts of abuse victims
- Second opinion
- Mimic vs abuse

- **Emergency Department**

- Suspected fracture
- Suspected head injury
- Suspected abdominal trauma
- Injuries requiring repair (stitches)
- Burns covering large area of skin or requiring immediate treatment
- Child has another medical condition requiring emergency care

# What happens during a PA exam?

Medical history

Physical exam

Special attention to skin, checking for hidden injuries, injuries in unusual locations, patterned injuries, etc.

Intra-oral exam

Open ended questions in verbal children (“What happened here?”)

Photographs of injuries

Treatment as indicated

Other lab or imaging as indicated

# Physical Abuse

- CAC Services
  - Medical Evaluation
    - Forensic Interview, ideally after exam so interviewer is aware of all child's injuries.
    - Medical Report written, documenting injuries and level of concern for injuries.
    - Copies of photos provided to investigators.
    - Advocacy services



What makes a CAC exam different from just looking at a child in the home?

Exam in medical setting can be unclothed (gown)

Exam room has better lighting

Expertise of medical staff in differentiating abuse from mimic

Forensic photography

Safe environment, suspected maltreater not present

Other lab and imaging tests can be ordered.

Medical diagnosis can be made.

# Drug Endangered Children

- INDICATIONS FOR A DEC MEDICAL EVALUATION

- *Child was removed from a drug environment prior to being placed in a new environment of care*
- *Child is 10 years old or younger*



# DEC PROCESS at LRCAC

*If you have determined that a drug endangered child medical evaluation is needed, follow these next steps.*

- **Bring child to CAC (eg Lakeshore Regional Child Advocacy Center (134 S Foster Drive, Saukville) to collect a urine specimen for urine drug investigation (UDI) panel during office hours Monday-Friday.**
- **Child must be toilet trained, *except on Thursdays* when medical services are present.**
- **Exam will be done same day** if medical services are present in the clinic **or may be scheduled for a future date.**
- **After hours,** the child should be brought to an Advocate Aurora or Children's Wisconsin emergency department.

Make sure the emergency department provider orders **urine drug investigation panel**, not a rapid drug screen.

# DEC Case

- Police respond to a scene in which a woman is found unresponsive from a drug overdose. She is revived with Narcan and transported to the hospital.
- There are a 9mo old and a 5yo in the home.
- The house is dirty with drug paraphernalia lying about on the floor and table.
- CPS is called to determine a protective plan for the children.
- What should be done next to protect evidence and help ensure the children's safety?

# DEC Case: CPS/Medical

- Determine if child requires a higher level of care (symptomatic or has another health condition requiring ED services) or if they can be seen in a clinic setting.
- Bring children to medical services for urine drug testing prior to placing children in a new environment.
  - CAC during office hours
    - If asymptomatic and not requiring higher level of care
    - If toilet trained can go to CAC Monday-Friday
    - If not toilet trained, medical staff must be available to collect bagged specimen
  - Milwaukee Child Advocacy Center during office hours
    - Medical services available Monday-Friday
  - Emergency Department after hours
    - Children's Wisconsin or other Hospital
    - Make sure the provider orders a Urine Drug Investigation Panel, not rapid ER screen (unless needed for treatment)



# Sexual Abuse Case

- 6yo female discloses to PCP that mom's boyfriend touched her genitals. PCP reports to CPS but doesn't feel comfortable doing the exam.
  - Determine when the most recent sexual contact was.
    - Acute (<72 hours): Needs to be seen urgently for evidence collection.
      - Child Advocacy Center
      - ED, Children's WI or other hospital after hours with Pediatric SANE services.
      - If child has severe pain or bleeding, will need ED Services
      - Will also need follow up care at a CAC in 2 weeks for STI testing
    - Non-acute (> 72 hours)
      - No severe pain or bleeding
      - Make appointment at a Child Advocacy Center for medical evaluation and forensic interview.

# Sexual Abuse Case

- 17yo is sexually assaulted by unknown male when she was walking home from store. Assailant kept her at his residence for 4 days. When she escapes, she presents to Police Station and reports the assault.
  - Acute Sexual Assault in an adolescent (<120 hours)
    - Child Advocacy Center during office hours
    - ED after hours
  - Child will require
    - Sexual assault evidence collection
    - STI and pregnancy prophylaxis
    - Follow up care in 2 weeks at a CAC

# Physical Abuse Case

- 6yo female goes to school and can't sit still in her chair. Teacher questions child and she states her butt hurts when she sits, but won't say why. She is brought to the school nurse who checks her over and becomes concerned for abuse. The school social worker calls CPS who responds to the school. The child discloses that she was spanked because she got in trouble at school the day prior.
- CPS notifies Law Enforcement for a joint investigation.
- Child is brought to CAC for medical evaluation.

# CAC visit

- Child is examined at CAC. No other injuries present other than buttocks bruising.
- Medical provider asks “what happened?” while examining the buttock area.
- Child reports “Mommy spanked me”.
- Photos of injuries taken
- Child has forensic interview following exam and reports multiple incidents of physical abuse in the past in addition to providing details regarding current injury.
- Investigators arrange for other children in the home to be forensically interviewed and medically evaluated.
- Mother is arrested and safety plan initiated for the children.

# Physical Abuse

- 4 mo old infant is brought to PCP for not bearing weight on right leg. No history of trauma is provided. “He just woke up that way”.
- PCP orders an x ray and a spiral femur fracture is noted.
- He calls CPS due to concern for abuse.
- Because the fracture requires a higher level of care, infant is brought to the ED.

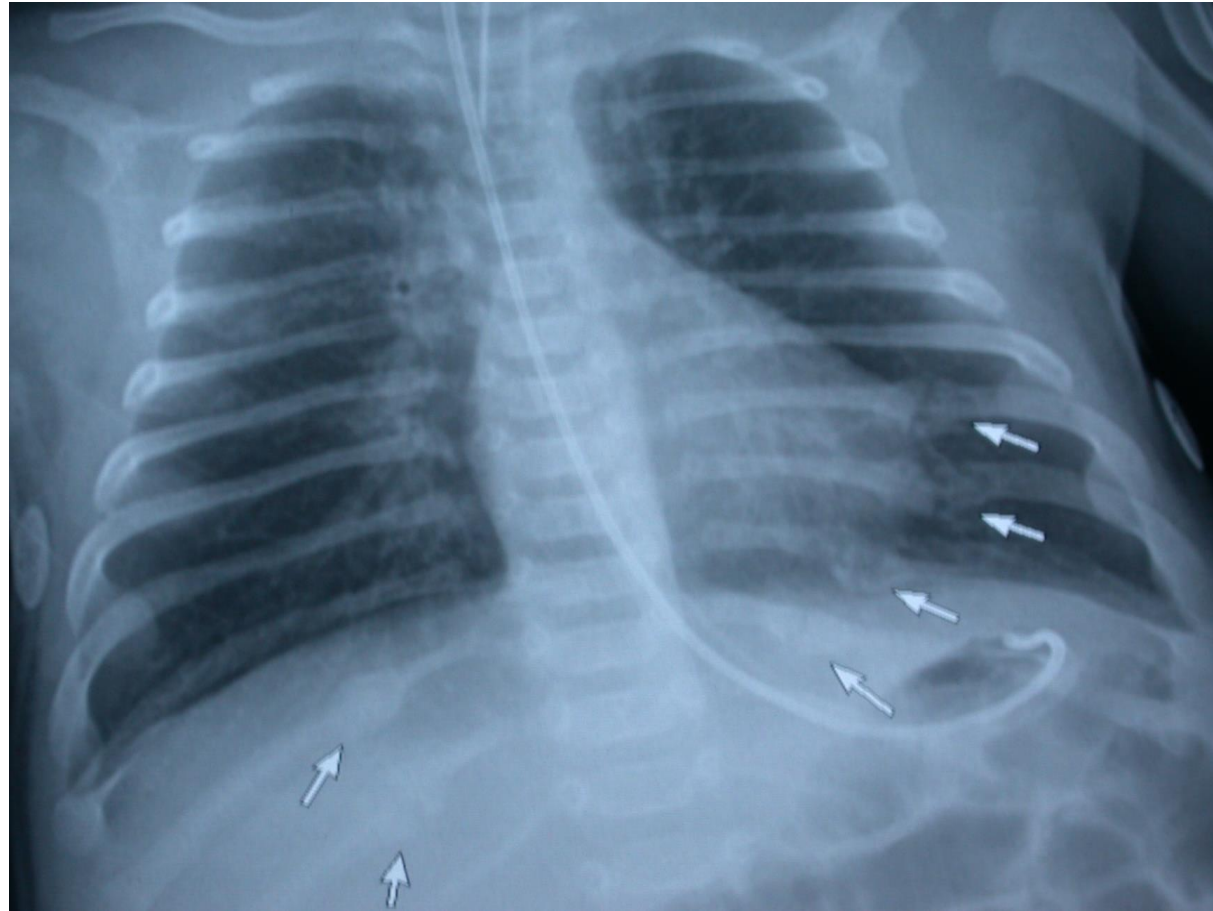
Spiral fracture



# ED Visit

- Exam: Swelling to right thigh, cries when leg manipulated. No bruising noted.
- Skeletal Survey: Healing rib fractures noted.
- CT Head: Normal
- Labs ordered including abdominal trauma, bone health labs, and UDI.
- Orthopedics is consulted and treats leg fracture.
- Safety plan implemented by CPS.
- Law Enforcement, CPS proceed with investigation.

# Rib fractures





# Take Home Points

Remember that timing of incident is important when determining when and where a child should be medically evaluated for sexual abuse concerns.

With physical abuse concern, children with serious injuries (head trauma, fractures, significant burns, injuries requiring repair) are better served in the ED setting, whereas children with less serious injuries (bruises, abrasions, small burns etc can be seen at the CAC).

In DEC cases, UDI should be obtained ASAP, before child is placed in different environment.

Use trauma informed decision making in determining where a child with concern for maltreatment is best served.

# Reference Materials

- Resources:
  - [Midwest Regional Children's Advocacy Center – Empowering you to better serve victims of child abuse \(mrcac.org\)](http://mrcac.org)
  - [Child Advocacy Centers of Wisconsin – CONNECTING CHILDREN WITH FAMILIES & KEEPING FAMILIES CONNECTED \(cacsofwi.org\)](http://cacsofwi.org)
    - WICAN Series
  - [American Professional Society Abuse Children | APSAC](http://apsac.org)
- Reference materials:
  - Medical Decision Making Guide
  - LRCAC Medical Triage Protocol
  - Scheduling DEC Exams at the CAC
  - DEC Protocol for Exams and Urine Testing

Questions?



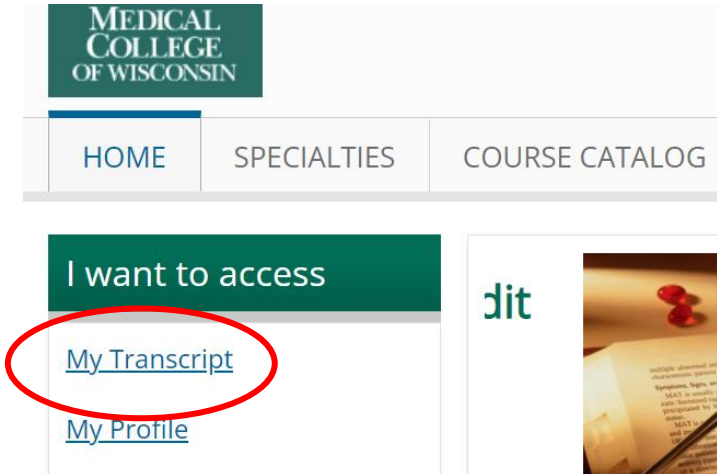
# HOW TO CLAIM CREDIT

To claim credit, complete an evaluation:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WICANAU>  
[G23](#)



You will then receive a code to text to **414-206-1776**. This will mark you as attended. To print a certificate, log into your account at [ocpe.mcw.edu](http://ocpe.mcw.edu) and click “My Transcript.”



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