

Your child has received an appointment with a specialist doctor – a Paediatrician as your child has reported sexual abuse or there has been a suspicion of sexual abuse. You will be phoned before your appointment by a nurse to confirm your details and provide an opportunity to discuss any concerns you may have. During the appointment you will also be given the opportunity to speak freely with the doctor. A nurse, or a support person, will wait with your child in another room during this time.

Your child's appointment will be in the Children's Clinic at Wellington Regional Hospital. This clinic is located on Level 5 of the Grace Neil Block. Parking is available in the underground hospital car park, accessed from Riddiford Street. Please expect your appointment to take up to 2 hours.

### **What will the appointment achieve?**

- A general health check for your child including any behavioural symptoms and provide you with advice to manage these.
- A decision whether your child needs a genital examination will be discussed with you during the appointment. A genital examination is not always necessary.
- We can help put you in touch with community services that offer specific support for children and their families following disclosures of sexual abuse.

### **What does a genital examination involve?**

A genital examination for children is much less invasive than an adult examination. Children may

wish to stay on their parents'/caregivers lap while being examined.

Before a genital examination begins there will need to be:

- A clinical reason to do the examination
- Your written consent
- Your child's consent by co-operation

**For girls-** we can often do the examination without removing underwear to keep the genital area as private as possible. The underwear will be pulled to one side, and the Paediatrician will touch the external genitalia to get a good look at the hymen. A speculum is never used. The anal area will also be checked.

**For boys-** we usually quickly examine their testes and penis, and also check the anal area.

We will discuss with you if we need take swabs to check for infection.

### **What happens next?**

Many of the events that happen to children don't result in any injuries that can be seen at the time of examination.

Often the medical examination is normal- even if the assault that your child has described included some degree of penetration of the genital or anal area.

The paediatrician will write a report summarizing the assessment and provide an opinion about the findings. This opinion will be discussed with you and made available to the referring agency and, with your permission, your child's GP.

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ACC are often able to fund counselling sessions for you and your child. We can facilitate a referral if required.

A follow-up phone call by a Registered Nurse will be offered 2 weeks after your initial appointment. This phone call will be to check how things are going with your child and your family. This is an opportunity to ask any further questions and to discuss any swab results if applicable. A follow-up appointment with the paediatrician may be discussed with you at this time.

### **The role of other agencies involved:**

NZ Police –the role of Police is to see if a crime has been committed and if charges should be laid.

CYF- the role of Child Youth and Family is to confirm that your child is currently living in a safe place and to help support you.

Health- The role of the Paediatrician is to check your child's mental and physical health.

