

What happens during the medical exam?

- Your child will receive a thorough check-up that may include looking at their eyes, ears and mouth, listening to the heart and lungs, feeling the abdomen and checking reflexes.
- Examination of the child's genital and anal areas involves looking at them to make sure they appear healthy. A special instrument called a colposcope is often used during examination. A colposcope is a light attached to a pair of binoculars, which allows the nurse or midwife to see a child's genital and anal areas more closely. The colposcope never touches the child's body and is never felt by the child. While the colposcope does not touch your child, the examiner will touch your child's genital and anal areas. The colposcope has a camera attached to it and images may be taken during the exam to provide an accurate record of what the child's body looks like.
- Teenage girls sometimes require a pelvic examination involving insertion of an instrument called a speculum into the vagina. Older girls also may need to provide a urine sample to check for pregnancy. Younger girls do not receive speculum exams at our clinic.
- Your child may also be tested for sexually transmitted infections. This is done by touching your child's throat, genitals and/or anus with small cotton swabs. A blood or urine test may also be needed. Any blood tests will be drawn at the Kyle Health Center and not at Four Directions.

Who do I call with questions about my appointment?

Call Four Directions Clinic at 605-455-8219. A medical professional will be happy to talk with you during office hours, Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Please understand that a medical professional may need to return your call during busy clinic hours.

Please let us know about any special needs your child has, or if there is information you feel would be helpful to us before your child's appointment.

Who will be given information about the examination?

The medical professional who examines your child will sit down with you after your child's check-up to explain the results of the child's exam.

In cases where there is an ongoing investigation into a report of possible sexual abuse, a written report of a child's medical evaluation can be provided to investigators only and in accordance with Indian Health Service policy. After an investigation, the child's legal guardian may obtain a copy of the medical report from the health records department at Kyle Health Center.



FOUR DIRECTIONS CLINIC

**Kyle Health Center Campus
Kyle, SD 57752
605-455-8219**

Why do children come to Four Directions?

Four Directions Clinic, part of the Kyle Health Center, provides medical evaluations for children when there are concerns about sexual abuse. Children may be referred for examination by Tribal Child Protective Services, FBI, Medical Providers, Hospitals and clinics, or other concerned adults. On occasion, a child may be examined at Four Directions for reasons not related to concerns of abuse. A pediatrician or other health care provider may request a medical opinion from the Four Directions' staff due to gynecological concerns or questions.

Why is the medical exam important?

The medical evaluation is done to see if your child has an injury, infection or other physical problem. Most children have no problems and can be reassured that their bodies are healthy. However, if there are signs of injury or infection, these can be documented and treated. There are times during the medical evaluation forensic evidence may need to be collected.

The exam can also provide a psychological benefit, showing a child that you and other trustworthy adults believe them and are making every effort to help. Many children also report a sense of relief once they have a chance to ask practitioners questions and gain reassurance that they are going to be okay.

Who will examine my child?

All examinations are conducted by a nurse or midwife who has received specialized training in the medical evaluation of sexual abuse.

Will the exam show whether or not my child has been sexually abused?

Not necessarily. Most children have no physical injuries to their genital or anal areas. This does not mean that no sexual abuse has occurred. It is possible that children have been involved in sexual activity and that it has not injured their bodies in a way that leaves lasting signs.

Why are there no signs?

Perpetrators do not want to risk losing access to the child, so they don't want to cause physical harm. Research shows that only 2.2% of children have injury from a sexual assault examined non-acutely (Joyce Adams, Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology 2018).

What should I tell my child about coming to Four Directions?

Many parents worry that telling children about the check-up before coming to our clinic will cause them to become upset and worried. However, it is important that children have accurate information about their visit so they will know what to expect, can prepare themselves, and have time to ask questions and express their feelings. Children are often less worried and more cooperative with medical procedures when they have been prepared in advance for what they will experience.

A few days before your appointment:

- Explain to your child that they will be coming to Four Directions for a check-up.
- Children should be told that they will talk with a person who will ask questions about their body and their health and that a nurse or midwife will look at their body, including their private parts, to make sure they are healthy.

- Reassure your child that there will be no painful procedures, such as shots, and that our staff will help them every step of the way.
- Encourage them to bring along a stuffed animal, blanket or other comforting object if it will help them feel more at ease.

What should I bring to the appointment?

If your child has received a genital or rectal exam in the past, medical reports or information about those exams would be useful to us. Please provide this information to us prior to your child's appointment so we may obtain those records and have them available on your child's appointment day.

Many parents find it helpful to bring an adult friend or relative. These individuals can provide support as well as keep children company while parents talk privately with our professional staff.

How long will my appointment last?

1-2 hours. Your appointment will include the medical evaluation, which includes your child's check-up, and time to talk with you before and after the exam.

May I stay with my child during the examination?

Many children prefer to do the exam on their own, with no parent in the room. Other children want a parent or supportive adult in the exam room with them for comfort and reassurance.

We will ask your child who, if anyone, they would like to have in the exam room. Whenever possible, we will respect your child's preference.