



UNDERGOING
A PHYSICAL
EXAMINATION:
YOUR RIGHTS



ABOUT CHAPERONES

In North Carolina, individual medical practices decide on their own whether to use chaperones and, if so, under what circumstances.

Chaperones are typical for certain types of patient encounters, especially intimate examinations.



> THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS ENCOURAGES PROVIDERS TO:

- Adopt a policy that patients may ask to have a chaperone in the examination room, and make sure this policy is widely communicated to all patients.
- Always provide a chaperone if a patient asks for one.
- Use authorized members of the health care team as chaperones and ensure that standards for privacy and confidentiality are met.
- Ensure that patients are given a chance to discuss concerns or questions with the medical provider in private (without the chaperone in the room) after the examination is over.

ADVOCATING FOR YOURSELF

If at any time you are uncomfortable, afraid or unsure if your provider's actions are appropriate, speak up immediately.



Say, "Stop" or "I need a break". Use body language, such as holding up hands to indicate "stop", to emphasize your words.



If it is not made clear why certain parts of the body are included the examination, ask for an explanation. For example, "Why is it necessary for you to touch my chest?"



If you are too scared or uncomfortable to go on with the exam, say "I can't continue". Stand up and prepare to leave the room, if needed.



REPORTING INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

If a provider's demeanor, words or actions seem inappropriate during an examination the only way it can be addressed is if it is reported.

> YOU MAY WISH TO EXERCISE SOME OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:

- Notify the practice manager or practice administrator of any unusual or inappropriate conduct by the medical provider.
- Report the medical provider to the North Carolina Medical Board (NCMB), or to the appropriate licensing Board.
- If you have been assaulted, report to local law enforcement.

A complaint may be filed with the NCMB at:

ncmedboard.org/complaints



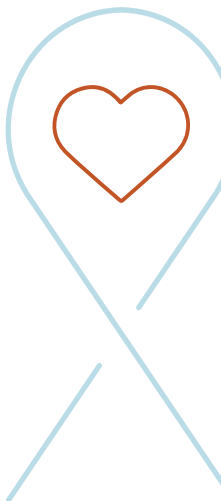
PRESERVING PATIENT DIGNITY

Patients have the right to be treated with respect and sensitivity to the vulnerable position they are in when undergoing a physical examination.



YOUR MEDICAL PROVIDER SHOULD ENSURE THIS BY:

- Performing the examination in a private room.
- Providing a private area for you to undress and re-dress, and giving you a gown or drape to cover up with, if you will need to disrobe for the examination. You should never be asked to take your clothing off in front of a medical professional or staff member.
- Using cloth or paper drapes to avoid exposing parts of your body that are not part of the examination.
- Having another member of the medical staff (such as a nurse) is in the room when you undergo an intimate examination such as a pelvic or rectal examination. This observer is known as a chaperone.
- Always wearing gloves when performing your intimate examination.



HELP FOR PATIENTS

NCMB's Victim Services Program helps patients through the trauma of sexual misconduct at the hands of a trusted medical professional.

Learn more at:

[ncmedboard.org/
victimservices](https://ncmedboard.org/victimservices)