

Smoking Guidelines Prior to Forensic Medical Exams
SART Listserv
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Issue:

Smoking Guidelines Prior to Forensic Medical Exams - Is there research that shows that smoking decreases the potential evidence collected with an oral swab? Eating and drinking make sense, but it would be good to know if there is evidence supporting a non-smoking recommendation.

New York

- Smoking is one of the activities patients are requested not to engage in if they are consenting to evidence collection.
- This is just a recommendation. If the patient needs a cigarette in order to go through with the evidence collection process, she can be given the choice of having the oral swab done immediately and then she can smoke before the rest of the exam and evidence collection process resumes.

New Jersey

- Victims are advised not to smoke prior to the exam.

Ohio

- We encourage our patients not to smoke, drink or eat.
- The not eating and drinking is actually the easiest for our patients to comply with.

Wisconsin

- Victims are encouraged not to smoke and it is explained to them why.
- We train our SANE, LE and advocates on this issue, but if a victim needs a cigarette we are not going to stop them.
- Medical forensic examiners are trained to collect evidence sooner rather than later from areas that degrade the fastest. The mouth is one of these areas.
- We are also training law enforcement to do buccal swabs.
- We have found that it can be difficult for victims to disclose that they have been forced to perform oral sex on an individual but that the collection of evidence from the mouth is not as traumatizing as evidence collection from other areas; so these efforts have been pretty successful.