Japan: information for victims of rape and sexual assault

This information is provided to help British nationals overseas make decisions about whether and how to seek medical advice and attention; report to local police; and engage with foreign legal authorities following a rape or other form of sexual assault overseas.

For information on support available in the UK, see Rape and Sexual Assault: Returning to the UK.

IMPORTANT: to call the police dial 110; if you require urgent medical assistance in Japan dial 119.

First steps

It is your choice about what you do next, but this information may help you in coming to a decision. The most important thing is to make sure you are as safe as you can be.

- Phone the police emergency number on 110 or an ambulance on 119 (To ask for an English speaker, please say: “Eigo de onegai shimasu”)
- Contact your tour operator if you are travelling with one
- Contact The British Embassy Tokyo on +81(0)3-5211-1100. You - or family/friends in the UK- can also call +44 (0)20 7008 1500. We will be polite, patient, sensitive and non-judgmental, and can provide information on local police and medical procedures. Anything you tell us will be treated in the strictest confidence. We can contact your family or friends if you wish.

British Embassy Tokyo
1 Ichiban-cho
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 102-8381

We are a five minute walk from Hanzomon metro station on the Hanzomon line.
https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-tokyo

If you report the incident to the British Embassy

We take any report of rape and sexual assault very seriously and will try to see you to offer you support as soon as possible and in private. We aim to be polite, patient, sensitive, and non-judgmental.

Many victims or rape and sexual assault, regardless of their gender, prefer to talk about their ordeal with a woman. If that is what you want, we will do our best to make sure that a female consular official is present at any meeting but this may not be possible.

We will provide information on local police and medical procedures to allow you to make informed decisions that are right for you. Anything you tell us will be treated in the strictest confidence. We can contact your family or friends for you if you wish.

We can help you report the incident to the police- we can speak to the nearest police station to where the incident occurred and can ask them to arrange a female police officer and interpreter if available.
We can help you to contact your insurance company and your family, travel back to the UK and provide you with information on local support in the UK. We can also provide you with lists of English-speaking medical facilities, lawyers and translators in Japan.

The crimes of rape and sexual assault are treated differently in Japan than they would be in the UK: the legal definition of rape in Japan is not the same as in the UK, and the authorities here may treat you in a different way than what you expect. We will do our best to help you, and provide advice about what to expect when dealing with the process.

We can tell you about local police and legal procedures. If you want to contact the police, we can come to the police station with you or speak to the police in advance of you visiting if we are not able to get to you quickly.

Here is some general information:

**If you want to report the incident to the police in Japan**

- Each prefecture in Japan has a telephone hotline (links below). If you do not speak Japanese, you can call the Tokyo police English hotline, 03-3501-0110.(Monday-Friday, 08:30-17:15)
- If you have a tour operator, they should be able to arrange for someone to support you.
- Consular staff can accompany you to the police station should you so wish and where possible
- If you approach the police directly, you can also ask them to inform the British Embassy, Tokyo.
- In Japan, the police prefer you to report the incident to the nearest police station to where the incident occurred. If you wish to report the crime, try to do so as soon as possible, so forensic evidence can be retained. Washing yourself or your clothes may make it difficult for the police to obtain forensic evidence. If you have changed your clothes, take the ones that you were wearing at the time of the attack to the police. You may wish to preserve evidence by retaining items such as condoms, toothbrushes, or texts messages.
- Tell the police if you think you have been drugged. Japan has strict laws around drug use, and the police are likely to ask questions if any illegal drugs are found in your system.
- Police reports can be difficult to obtain as a victim of crime in Japan. If you have difficulty, the Embassy can make a request on your behalf
- If you want to, you can request to speak to a female police officer or you can ask us to call the police station in advance to request a female officer, but please be aware that not all police stations can accommodate this request, especially as several officers may be involved in handling your investigation.
- Not all police stations will have English-speaking officers available and you may have to wait for an interpreter. We can call a police station in advance to request that an interpreter be made available.
- You will be asked to provide a written statement. Physical evidence (such as clothing and DNA samples) may also be requested. If you would like us to, a consular officer can accompany you to the police station and be there during your interview with the police. Our role will be to support you. We are not able to provide formal interpretation, but can help you to communicate what it is you wish to report to the police officers.
In Japanese criminal law, rape is forcible sexual intercourse, including anal or oral sex, with the use of assault or intimidation, and prosecutors may not take the case forward if they feel there is not strong evidence of force or intimidation.

The British Embassy has received feedback from some rape and sexual assault victims that they have found the process of reporting the assault at times difficult, and quite different from what they would expect of UK police proceedings.

If you do not want to report the incident to the police in Japan

- The British Embassy will still be able to help you. This includes helping you make arrangements to contact your insurance company, your family, travel back to the UK and/or provide you with lists of English-speaking medical facilities, lawyers and translators.

- It is your choice on whether to report the crime and when. However, timing is important for investigation due to forensic evidence. In Japan, you must report the crime before leaving the country. It is difficult to get a police report number after you have left the country and the police may only accept a report when you are in Japan.

- You will still be able to receive medical attention if you do not report the crime, but hospitals may not be able to provide full assistance without first consulting the police.

If you want to report the incident to the police in the UK

- It is possible to report the crime to police in the UK. However, it is for foreign police forces to decide whether to investigate a crime in their jurisdiction, and in the case of the Japanese police, they request that the complaint be made in Japan. UK police forces cannot investigate crimes committed overseas. Foreign police forces can decide to request assistance from the UK police, but this cannot be guaranteed and is a very lengthy process. It can therefore be very difficult to guarantee that any justice can be accessed locally without reporting the crime locally. Please see Rape and Sexual Assault: Returning to the UK after rape or sexual assault abroad for more information.

Reporting the crime in Japan – what happens next?

- When you report a crime in Japan as part of the police investigation, they will want to interview you about what happened. This will include full details of the incident and you will be asked for a description of the attacker(s). The interview may take several hours and could be conducted in a regular interrogation room.

- The police should provide you with an interpreter if you need one; however, there is no guarantee of the quality. This may be done in person or by an interpreter over the phone.

- You may be able to have friends or family with you when you are interviewed. If you want to, we can ask to stay with you during your interview. The police may ask to keep some of your clothes or belongings if they are to be used as evidence. The police may take you to a hospital for treatment and examination. A police officer may accompany you when speaking to doctors.

- The crimes of rape and sexual assault are treated differently in Japan than they would be in the UK: the legal definition of rape in Japan is not the same as in the UK, and the
authorities here may treat you in a different way than what you expect. To establish a case, victims may be asked to prove violence and/or intimidation. We will do our best to help you, and provide advice about what to expect when dealing with the process.

- You are free to leave Japan after reporting what has happened to the police. You may be asked to remain in the country during the police investigation and court proceedings, but you are not obliged to do so.

- If a suspect is brought to the police station, you may be asked to make an identification through a two-way mirror or similar. You should not be asked to meet directly with the suspect.

- It is common practice by police in Japan to ask a victim to recreate the incident using dolls (“dummy ningyo” which means “dummy dolls”). During the investigation, you may be also asked to visit the location of the assault to look for evidence with the police. Some victims have told us that they find these parts of investigation difficult.

- If the police make an arrest, they will take the suspect before the public prosecutor within 48 hours. The prosecutor can then request the suspect be detained for a further 10 days. This can then be extended for an additional 10 days for a total of 23 days before they must decide whether to charge the suspect.

- The public prosecutor may ask you to make a statement and ask you questions. If you would like to, you can speak to a lawyer before you do this.

- Under Japanese law, defamation and making false allegations are illegal. If a defendant is found not guilty, they may be able to make a claim against their accuser.

- The process of investigating and bringing charges can take many months. We can help liaise with your lawyer and the police during this time particularly if you are no longer in Japan.

- If you decide not to make a formal complaint, the police will not automatically continue their investigation.

The medical examination – what to expect

- Hospitals will not automatically report what has happened to the police. So it is sometimes useful to go to the police first and have them direct and accompany you to the hospital.

- Not all hospitals and medical centres are able to help victims of rape and sexual assault as they do not all have rape kits. You may be required to pay for a kit – the cost of which is around £200.

- You will be examined by a doctor who will check for external injuries, the possibility of sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, and will help collect any evidence with swabs and DNA samples.

- We can accompany you to the hospital but would not be able to provide medical interpretation.
Please be aware that English-speaking doctors and nurses may be available in large, metropolitan hospitals, but this will not always be the case. Some doctors may only know technical medical vocabulary in English, and communicating more detailed, sensitive topics may be challenging. If you are outside a major city, it is likely to be difficult to find English support at most hospitals. Some of the larger hospitals may have social workers who speak English and are able to support you during your visit. 
http://www.japanhospitalsearch.org/

Treatment

- Japan has a national health insurance system that will cover some of the costs if you are a resident, though contraception and STI testing is not covered under the scheme. If you are a visitor to Japan, you will either be expected to cover the costs of care yourself, or claim through insurance. It is not uncommon for hospitals to refuse to provide treatment until you have proved you can pay.

- Hospital staff will be able to provide advice on sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, AIDS, and pregnancy and abortion. Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) are available in Japan by prescription and your doctor will discuss with you whether these are appropriate for you. Prescriptions will need to be paid for and are not covered by the Japanese health insurance system.

- HIV PEP medication needs to be taken within 72 hours of the incident for it to be effective. The NHS may be able to commence or continue the 28 day treatment on return to the UK

- Emergency contraception needs to be taken within 72 hours of the incident for it to be effective. This is prescription only and not available in all clinics and the costs are not covered by Japanese national health insurance, the costs vary clinic to clinic.

- STI testing and treatment in Japan is available at Urology (male) and Gynaecology (female) clinics. Costs vary greatly from 15,000-40,000 yen and are not covered by Japanese health insurance. Some public health clinics offer free testing services.

- If you have had medication administered overseas, you may wish to keep the label or make a note of the name of the medication, so that you let your local health provider know when you return home.

Court procedures – what to expect

- If a case goes to trial, you may be asked to attend the trial as a witness. If you have left Japan, the public prosecutor may provide funding for you to return. You may be able to testify through video link from another part of the court, or through video link from within Japan. If you want to, you may be allowed to have family or friends next to you when you give your statement. You can ask for your name not to be mentioned in court, but the court will be open to the public including the press.

- The public prosecutor’s office will be able to keep you updated on the progress of the trial. We can help you communicate with your lawyer and the police, particularly if you are no longer in Japan.
• If you file charges against your assailant, you are able to drop them at any time. However, if you decide to do this, you will not be able to reinstate them.

• You may be encouraged to reach a settlement with your assailant that could involve them paying you a certain amount of money as compensation. This would take the place of any criminal investigation.

• There is a government-funded benefit system for crime victims. If you meet certain conditions, you may be entitled to claim benefits under this system. Information is available through the Ministry of Justice.

If you return home to the UK

• You may want to let your GP or a Sexual Assault Referral Centre know what has happened to you so that you can talk about the experience and seek further support and advice.

• If you believe you may be at risk of having contracted a sexually transmitted infection (STI), you can ask your local health provider to test you, even if you have been tested in the country that the assault took place in.

• The Japanese police will not automatically inform the UK police.

• More information about help available in the UK can be found on our website.

Support organisations in Japan

It is your choice as to whether you let people know about the attack. If you are ready to talk about it, the following organisations may be able to help you.

Sexual Assault Relief Centre (SARC)
http://sarc-tokyo.org/
03-5607-0799
English support is sometimes available. Embassy staff can help to arrange this.
SARC offer support and are able to direct you to medical services, help report the incident to the police, and connect you with legal specialists.

AMDA International Medical Information Centre
http://amda-imic.com/lng_eng/
Tokyo: 03-5285-8088; Kansai: 06-4395-0555
Mon-Fri: 09:00-17:00. English available.
AMDA provide information on medical services available in Japan.

Tokyo Metropolitan Health and Medical Information Centre Foreign Language Assistance (Himawari)
03-5285-8181
Mon-Sun: 09:00-20:00. English available. Emergency interpretation available on 03-5285-8185, weekdays 17:00-20:00; Weekend/holidays 09:00-20:00. Himawari provide information in English about medical services in Tokyo.

Tokyo English Life Line (TELL)
Police Prefectural Consultation Services
https://www.npa.go.jp/consultation/sousa1/index.htm
Contact details for each prefecture are listed in the link above.
Various hours; English rarely available.
These are free consultation services offered by the police in each prefecture in Japan.
They can advise you on the best course of action for your individual situation in Japanese.

The Japan Legal Support Centre (Houterasu)
http://www.houterasu.or.jp/
0570-07-8377
Mon-Fri: 09:00-17:00. English available.
Houterasu offers legal assistance by appointment in English.

The Japan Federation of Bar Associations
http://www.nichibenren.or.jp/en/legalinfo/counseling.html
03-5312-5850
Hours vary by location. English available.
Legal counselling for foreign nationals.

St. Luke’s International Hospital (Tokyo): 03-3550-7166

Tokyo Metropolitan Hiroo Hospital (Tokyo): 03-3441-1181
Support organisations in the UK

More information about help available in the UK can be found on our website.

The National Health Service for victims of rape and sexual assault
https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Sexualhealth/Pages/Sexualassault.aspx

NHS information on HIV/AIDS and Post-exposure Prophylaxis
http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/HIV/Pages/Treatmentpg.aspx

Victim support UK

0845 3030 900
Victim Support provides information and confidential support to victims of rape and sexual assault, and can refer victims to other support networks and local agencies if necessary. Their national helpline is open from 9am to 8pm, Monday to Friday, and from 9am to 7pm at weekends and 9am–5pm on Bank Holidays.
https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/

Police in UK

Project Sapphire is a Metropolitan Police scheme aimed at improving rape investigation and victim care. Project Sapphire can put you in touch with local police and support services wherever you live in the UK.
www.met.police.uk/sapphire
http://content.met.police.uk/Site/victimadvice
http://content.met.police.uk/Site/sapphire

Rape Crisis England and Wales
https://rapecrisis.org.uk/
Freephone 0808 802 9999
(between 12–2.30pm, 7pm–9.30pm)
www.rapecrisis.org.uk

On this website, you will find information about rape and other forms of sexual violence and details of your nearest Rape Crisis Centre if you are looking for support. There is also information for family and friends of sexual violence survivors, students and professionals.

Contact email: info@rapecrisis.org.uk

Rape Crisis Scotland
https://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk/
Freephone 0808 801 0302
(everyday 6pm until midnight) or if you’re hard of hearing minicom number 0141 353 3091

The Havens
https://www.thehavens.org.uk/

The Survivors Trust
http://thesurvivorstrust.org/information-for-survivors/
An umbrella group, which provides a link to over 70 member organisations working with victims of sexual crime, including child abuse.

FPA
FPA (previously called the Family Planning Association) provides advice and details of local sexual health clinics in the UK.
www.fpa.org.uk

Terrence Higgins Trust
The Terrence Higgins Trust helpline is open 10am-8pm Monday to Friday and provides information and counselling for people who know or fear they might have a sexually transmitted infection, particularly HIV or AIDS.
www.tht.org.uk

Survivors UK
0845 1221201
Survivors UK supports and provides resources for men who have experienced any form of sexual violence. Their national helpline for men and their families, partners and friends is open 7pm–9.30pm Monday and Tuesday and midday to 2.30pm on Thursdays.
www.survivorsuk.org

Refuge
0808 2000 247
Refuge has a 24-hour helpline that offers support and practical help to women experiencing domestic violence, including rape and sexual assault.
www.refuge.org.uk

Relate
0300 100 1234
Relate offers a relationship counselling service, and provides a counselling service for victims of rape and sexual assault and their partners, particularly where trauma leads to relationship difficulties. Their helpline is open Monday–Thursday 8am–10pm, Fridays 8am– 6pm and Saturdays 9am–5pm
www.relate.org.uk

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust
020 7091 0041
(Monday to Friday 9.30am–5pm)
The Suzy Lamplugh Trust offers advice on personal safety and tips on how to avoid being the victim of aggression. The Trust publishes a ‘Worldwise’ handbook and video on safer travel abroad, and has a ‘Worldwise’ website from which you can download specific ‘safety’ guidance on countries throughout the world.
www.suzylamplugh.org

Samaritans
08457 909090
Samaritans has a 24-hour helpline that offers confidential emotional support for people who are suicidal or distressed.
www.samaritans.org

Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre – (South London)
0808 802 9999 (12noon–2.30pm and 7pm–9.30pm daily)
Will provide support and counselling for women and girls, but can refer male victims to other organisations.

This information is provided as a general guide based upon information provided to the British Embassy by the relevant local authorities and may be subject to change at any time with little or no notice. The FCO and the British Embassy will not be liable for any inaccuracies. In addition, we make no representation as to the quality or accuracy of the information which is available at the web addresses listed in this guide, nor can we accept any responsibility for the content that is hosted on them. British nationals wishing to obtain any further information must contact the relevant local authority. This information is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical or legal advice. Updated June 2019