

New York State Rape Kits Get DNA Upgrade

BY ANNIKA HARRIS

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We're definitely in the DNA age, people. You only need to tune into the paternity-testing "The Maury Show" or a crime show marathon to know that. So it's about time New York state gives its rape testing kits, which were first introduced in emergency rooms 20 years ago, a DNA upgrade. Today, state officials are slated to reveal the new kits, which also include instructions on collecting evidence from male victims and a training video narrated by Mariska Hargitay (because her role as a detective on "Law & Order: SVU" has made her an expert). Developers from St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals in NYC say they have learned what works and what doesn't over the years and the new kit is more comprehensive. Now, the kits provide special envelopes and swabs to collect an attacker's bodily fluids or other evidence left behind that might contain DNA. The kits also provide information for health professionals to deal with male victims, which is a good thing since the ratio of male sexual assault victims in New York is much higher than the national ratio of one in eight. [NY Post]

I have to say I'm slightly shocked the old rape kits weren't this comprehensive. I thought the whole point of a rape kit was to collect DNA.