

Information for parents and carers about injuries, bruises, marks or bleeding in immobile children.

Version 0.1, December 2016

You have been provided with this leaflet because someone who provides care for you or your child has found a possible injury on your child (for example a bruise or mark) or you may have reported your child has been bleeding.

If any professional identifies such things in a child who is not mobile (*immobile) and there is no clear explanation they are required to refer the child to Children's Social Care. Children's Social Care will arrange an assessment by a Children's Specialist Doctor (Paediatrician) who will then need to examine the child.



(*immobile children are those not yet crawling, cruising or walking independently or are older children who are not mobile because of a disability).

Q: Why do immobile children with injuries or bleeding need to see a Paediatrician?

A: It is rare for children who are not able to move around by themselves to have an injury or bleeding. This can, for example, be a sign of a health condition, a blood disease or an infection. This means it is important that a Paediatrician looks at your child and discusses with you why there might be an injury or bleeding.

Q: Why are injuries or bleeding in immobile children such a concern?

A: It is difficult to cause an injury or bleeding to immobile children with day-to-day activities such as feeding, nappy changing and normal handling. Even where babies fall or get knocked it is unusual for them to be injured or bleed (unlike children who are crawling or walking who often get bumps and bruises). However, there are also some important causes of injuries or bleeding which may seriously affect the child's health. The child may bruise easily, for example due to a blood disorder or an infection such as meningitis. Very occasionally injuries or bleeding may be due to deliberate injury. Even where there is an apparent simple explanation it is important to rule out these more serious conditions. It also sometimes takes an expert to tell the difference between a bruise and certain type of birthmark.

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Q: I understand the reason for seeing a Paediatrician but why do I need to be referred to Children's Social Care?

A: Although rare, injuries or bleeding are occasionally caused by deliberate acts. It is important that where this occurs, it is picked up as soon as possible in order to support the family and protect the child. Referral to Children's Social Care is not an accusation of wrongdoing, but a way of looking for causes of injuries in the same way that the doctor looks for illness.

Q: What will happen next?

A: A member of Children's Social Care will contact you to talk to you about your child and what will happen next. Arrangements will be made to have an appointment as soon as possible, and preferably straight away, with a Paediatrician. The Paediatrician will talk to you about your child, examine your child fully and decide whether or not to do further investigations such as blood tests or x-rays and decide whether your child needs any further treatment. The Paediatrician will then talk to Children's Social Care.

Q: What will Children's Social Care and the health specialist do?

A: Children's Social Care will check whether you have received services from them in the past, ask for information from your GP, Health Visitor and/or School Nurse and will make arrangements to speak to you. This may be at the same time as your attendance with the specialist Paediatrician or at a separate appointment and they may want to visit you at home. They will then discuss their findings with the Paediatrician who examined your child to decide together whether any further action needs to be taken or any treatment given.

Q: All of this is very upsetting. I feel as though I am being accused of hurting my child. Why do I have to be put through this?

A: We understand this can be very upsetting but the only way of picking up serious causes of injuries or bleeding is to investigate every case where it occurs. However you can be reassured that you will be treated with courtesy and sensitivity and your explanations will be listened to and discussed with you. You will also be kept informed at all times so that you know what is going on and why. You can ask questions at any time and will be given the opportunity to discuss your concerns fully at every stage.

Safeguarding Children Board Procedures:

North Yorkshire: www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk

City of York: www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk

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