

Q. Why do I need to be referred to Children's Services?

A: Although rare, bruising may be caused by deliberate injury. It is important that, where this occurs, it is picked up as soon as possible in order to support your family and to protect your child. Referral to Children's Services is not an accusation of wrongdoing, but a way of looking for causes of bruising in the same way that the doctor looks for illnesses. Even when bruising is due to accidental falls and knocks, your family may benefit from advice on accident prevention and home safety.

Q: What will Children's Services do?

A: Children's Services will make enquiries about you and your child. They will check whether you have received services from them in the past, ask for information from your health visitor and will make arrangements to speak to you either by phone or in person. This may be at the same time as your attendance with the 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.

Further information and support

The Children's Hub

(Children's Services)
01642 130080 OR
01429 284284
Or email:
childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk

Middlesbrough MACH

01642 726004
MiddlesbroughMACH@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Redcar and Cleveland MACH

01642 130700
RedcarMACH@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

NSPCC

www.nspcc.org.uk
0808 800 5000
Or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Family Rights Group

0808 801 0366
<http://www.frg.org.uk/>

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

BRUISING IN NON-MOBILE INFANTS



You have been given this leaflet because a member of staff has noticed a bruise on your child.

Q: Why is bruising in children who are not independently mobile, such a concern?

A: It is rare for children who are not able to move around by themselves (or independently mobile) to get a bruise or an injury during normal day to day activities such as feeding, nappy changing and normal handling.

Even when babies fall or get knocked, it is unusual for them to bruise. There are also some important causes of bruising that may seriously affect the child's health. A bruise may be related to a health condition that has not been previously identified and which may need treatment. Bruising may also be due to deliberate injury. Even where there is an apparently simple explanation, it is important for professionals to make further enquiries.

Any professional identifying bruising in a child who is not independently mobile must discuss the child with Children's Services (Social Worker). Children's Services will arrange for the child to be seen by a paediatrician (a child specialist doctor).

Q: What will happen now?

A: The social worker will make arrangements for your child to have an appointment with a paediatrician as soon as possible (within 24 hours). This may mean attending your nearest hospital or a community health clinic. The paediatrician will talk to you about your child, examine your child fully and decide whether or not to do any further investigations such as blood tests, x-rays or scans. These tests can take time and may involve staying in the hospital. After this, the paediatrician will explain to you what they think is the cause of the bruising. A body map will be completed to show the location, size and severity of the bruise which remains on your child's medical record.

Q: Why does my child need to see a paediatrician?

A: A bruise can be a sign of a health condition, a blood disease, or an infection. It also sometimes takes an expert to tell the difference between a bruise and a certain types of birthmark, which can look very similar to bruising. The paediatrician will examine your child, discuss why there might be a bruise, and rule out or diagnose these more serious conditions.

Q: All 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 know this can be very upsetting, but the only way of picking up the occasional serious cause of bruising is to investigate every case where it occurs. 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 fully informed at all times so that you know exactly 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.

All professionals working with children are expected, as part of their professional duties, to make inquiries to ensure that children are kept safe from harm. Where bruising is not accidental, immediate steps can be taken to protect the child from further harm.

