



Unexplained injuries/ bruising in babies and children who are not moving independently

Information for parents and carers



If a bruise, injury or mark has been noticed on your baby or child, this leaflet aims to help parents and carers understand what happens next.

Broken bones or bruising can happen as part of normal child development. Injuries can be caused by others either by accident or deliberately. If the injuries look unusual or cannot be properly explained, you will be asked to take your child to see a children's doctor called a 'paediatrician'. The paediatrician has a duty of care to investigate the cause of any injury and will gather information and examine your child.



What will happen now?

Everyone who works with children has a responsibility to keep children safe. Our priority is to do this by working with families in an open and honest way and this is the process we have to follow.

- Whenever there are concerns about an unexplained injury or bruise, health professionals must contact Children's Social Care.
- The police are likely to be contacted and may want to speak to you to find out what happened. You will be asked questions about your child's health and how the injuries may have occurred. Different people may ask the same questions and this may feel uncomfortable at times. The medical team need to make sure they have all the available information to make the right decisions in the best interest of your child's health and well-being. **"If you don't know how your child was injured, say you don't know. If you do know, say how, so that professionals can work with you and your family in the best way possible".**

Parent Advisor

- The medical team may need further information about your child by speaking with other specialist doctors, your child's GP, health visitor, school nurse or teacher.
- Your child will be discussed with a paediatric consultant and the Hospital's Safeguarding Children's Team. Your child may require further tests to help the medical team find out the reason for their injury and to ensure that there are not any other concerns. The paediatrician will discuss these investigations with you.

These investigations or tests may include:

- Blood tests – your child may need blood tests to check that they have normal blood levels and also that they have no medical reason for their injuries.
- Skeletal survey – a series of x rays of all the bones in the body to help identify any broken bones.
- CT Scan – is a special type of x-ray using a scanner and computer equipment to take pictures of the brain or spine

- Body map – baby/child will be undressed and fully examined all over.
- Photographs
- Eye examination – an eye specialist will look into the back of your child’s eyes with a special light, this is to see if they have had any small bleeds
- MRI scan of the head. If the CT scan shows bleeding in the brain, an MRI scan is usually arranged for five to seven days after the CT scan. Your child may have another MRI scan at a later date to monitor the bleeding.

What will children social care do?

A referral will most probably be made to Children’s Social Care where the medical team will share information. Children’s Social Care have a legal duty to make enquiries and to decide whether a child with unusual or unexplained injuries requires action to be taken to make them safe. Whilst they are making these enquiries, your child may be admitted to hospital or the social worker will work with you to identify a family member or friend that can

support you and your child, such as somewhere your child can stay whilst investigations take place.

A meeting may take place that includes social care, the police, health services and other professionals who may currently be working with your family, for example a nursery keyworker, school teacher, domestic abuse worker, drug and alcohol worker or housing support worker. A safety plan will be discussed with you and put in place to ensure that your child is kept safe. An assessment may be required of your family’s circumstances and if this is the case, the social worker will work with you to carry this out.



Will my child be taken away?

Where possible, Children's Social Care prefer that children remain with their families and will work with parents to help keep their child safe. However, if the child will not be safe in the family home, Children's Social Care will work with the family to identify somewhere else they can live and be kept safe.

We are here to help

We realise that this is a stressful time for you, your child and your family and nobody wants to cause you more upset than you may already be feeling. All the staff are here to help. It is important that you understand what to expect. Please ask if you need anything explained further.

You will be kept informed of any decisions

Information from professionals will only be shared with the professionals working with your family and will remain confidential. The



welfare of brothers and sisters and any other children in the household may also need to be considered and a safety plan made. We all have a responsibility to make sure children and young people are safe and well cared for. If there are concerns that a child has been harmed or may suffer harm, we have a legal duty to act on the concern. Agencies work together with you as parents or carers to ensure your child is safe and well cared for.

What rights do I have?

It is important that you understand what is happening and what the next steps may be. This should be clearly explained to you at each stage. If you are unhappy about the service/care you or your child has received, please discuss this with the appropriate professional and they will sign post you to the relevant complaints procedures for that agency.

What rights does my child have?

Your child has the right to be protected from harm and agencies will work together with you as a parent or carer to ensure your child is safe and well cared for.

Where can I get support and advice?

- Bexley Social Care: 0203 045 5440
- Parent Support Group – www.psg.org.uk
- The Family Rights Group: 0800 800 5000: www.frg.org.uk
- Child Law Advice: <http://childlawadvice.org.uk>
- National Society for the Prevention Cruelty to Children: www.nspcc.org.uk

The NSPCC has helplines that children and adults can ring for advice and support. Children and young people can call Child Line on 0800 1111. Adults can call 0808 800 5000 for help and advice.



Leaflet co-created
with Parent Advisor

Follow us



If you would like the information in this document in a different format, please call 020 8303 7777 and ask for Communications/Graphics. The reference to quote is: 607580/11.19