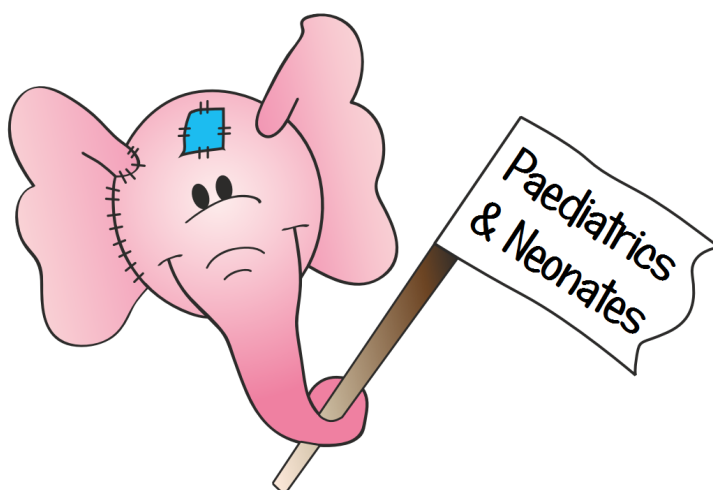


# Bruising in babies and young children

**Children's Ward**

Parent/Carer Information Leaflet



## **Introduction**

Bruises are unusual in babies and young children who cannot move around by themselves. However, there are some important causes of bruising which may seriously affect the child's health.

The child may:

- bruise easily, for example, due to a medical condition called haemophilia
- be suffering from a blood disease such as leukaemia
- have an infection such as meningitis

Very occasionally bruising may be due to deliberate injury.

Even where there is an apparently simple explanation, it is important for professionals to make further enquiries.

Your health professional will make arrangements for you to have an appointment with a child specialist (paediatrician) as soon as possible, so that your child's bruises can be investigated.

## **What will happen at this appointment?**

The specialist will talk to you about your child, examine your child fully and decide whether or not to do further investigations such as blood tests, X-rays, CT scans or full skeletal surveys.

After this, the child specialist will explain to you what they think has caused the bruising. A body map will be completed to show the location, size and severity of the bruise(s).

## **Why does my child need to see a specialist doctor?**

It is rare for babies and infants to have a bruise. A bruise can be a sign of an underlying health condition, a blood disease or an infection.

This means that it is important for a child specialist doctor to examine your child and discuss with you why there might be a bruise, and to rule out or diagnose these more serious conditions.

It also sometimes takes an expert to tell the difference between a bruise and certain types of birthmark which can look very similar to bruising.

There is also a requirement that health professionals discuss the bruising with Children's Services.

## **Why do I need to be referred to Children's Services?**

Although rare, bruising is occasionally caused by deliberate injury. 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 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 falls and knocks, it is likely that the family will benefit from advice on accident prevention and home safety.

### **What will Children's Services do?**

Your health professional will ring Children's Services, who will make some enquiries about you and your child. They will check whether you have received services from them in the past, ask for information from your GP and your health visitor.

They will make arrangements to speak to you either by phone or in person. This may be at the same time as you see the child specialist or at a separate appointment. In addition, they may want to visit you at home.

They will then discuss their findings with the specialist who examined your child to decide whether any further action needs to be taken or any treatment given.

### **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?**

We know this can be very upsetting but the only way of picking up the occasional serious cause for 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 enquiries to ensure that children are kept safe from harm. Where bruising is non-accidental, immediate steps can be taken to protect the child from further harm.

### **My child is disabled and gets bruised easily because of this. What will happen to my child?**

Professionals know that bruising in disabled children especially those with additional communication and learning difficulties is more difficult to assess. However as these children are more likely to suffer abuse from carers, this has to be explored.

You and your child will be referred to a child specialist and Children's Services for examination and advice. If the bruising is consistent with any

explanation provided by you or your child, a body map will be completed noting the location, size and severity of the bruise(s). Advice will be given if that is considered appropriate.

If you have any questions or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Children's Ward on 01384 244271

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/paediatrics-and-neonatology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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