

# Local Safeguarding Children Board

## One Minute Guide

1 June 2016

### Bruising in Children who are not Independently Mobile

***“Children who don't Cruise don't Bruise”***



This Guidance provides all professionals with a knowledge base and awareness of their responsibilities in relation to children who are not independently mobile presenting with bruising or other suspicious marks.

Children with disabilities who are not mobile should also be considered within this guidance.

**KEY MESSAGES:** see also <http://www.core-info.cf.ac.uk/bruising>

- Bruising is the commonest presenting feature of physical abuse in children.
- The younger the child the higher the risk that the bruising is non-accidental, particularly when the child is under 6 months old
- Bruising in any child 'not independently mobile' should raise suspicion of maltreatment
- Even apparently minor bruising may be an indicator that the infant or child is at risk of serious harm
- There may be an underlying medical problem that will need attention

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#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

For the majority of cases a referral to Social Care will be required. The child's parents / carers should be informed\* of the existence of this guidance and the reasons for the referral made clear. It is recognised that a small percentage of bruising in pre-mobile babies will have an innocent explanation or a medical cause. Nevertheless, because of the difficulty in excluding non-accidental injury, it is recommended that professionals seek advice immediately from Children's Social Care **and / or** a consultant paediatrician.

Transfer to a Hospital is a priority if the child is obviously unwell and should be arranged via emergency ambulance where appropriate.

These situations do need careful and detailed assessment and if the child is not referred, the person making that decision must take regard of:

1. Their competence to assess in this arena
2. The history of the injury
3. The fact that a full examination of the child is a requirement
4. The fact that there should be an assessment of the child's circumstances and safety



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Having considered all these, if a competent professional is confident to exclude Non Accidental Injury or underlying serious illness, then that decision and the reasoning should be clearly recorded in their notes. For all babies and non mobile preschool children the Health Visitor must be informed of the incident and decision.

\*An explanatory leaflet is available if required.

## MEDICAL ASSESSMENT

1. A bruise should never be interpreted in isolation and must always be assessed in the context of medical and social care history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Before concluding that the bruising is adequately explained and of no safeguarding concern, the examining medical practitioner should obtain relevant information from all available sources e.g: health visitor, GP, health records, social services, nursery etc.
2. A full clinical examination of the whole body of the child or young person should be undertaken. Haematological and biochemical studies including a clotting screen may be necessary to identify possible medical causes contributing to bruising. It is important to remember that a medical condition predisposing to bruising does NOT exclude the possibility of non-accidental injury
3. Any child under 2 years presenting with unexplained bruising should have a full skeletal survey, including a CT Brain scan (see guidelines for requesting, repeating and reporting on skeletal surveys). Retinal examination by an experienced ophthalmologist is essential to exclude eye injury including retinal haemorrhages.
4. The potential need for a medical examination of all other children in the household should also be considered and discussed with Social Care as part of the assessment process.

## CONTACT DETAILS

**If you have concerns about bruising in children who are not independently mobile contact:**

**Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) - 0300 123 5012**  
**Emergency Duty Team (EDT) - 0300 123 5022**

**Consultant Paediatrician – Crewe area: 9 to 5 weekdays on 01270 255 141**  
**On call Paediatrician outside these hours**

**Consultant Paediatrician on call – Macclesfield District General Hospital**  
**(For Macclesfield, Holmes Chapel, Congleton, Poynton areas) on 01625 421000**