

Information for parents and carers

Bruising in children who are not independently mobile



Bruising in young babies

A bruise or mark has been noticed on your baby. This leaflet has been provided to explain the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership's Bruising Protocol. Similar procedures exist across the UK.

Why are we concerned about bruising to young babies?

Bruising in babies who are not able to move by themselves (crawling or cruising) is unusual. It is very unusual for a baby to get a bruise during everyday activities such as nappy changes, bathing or feeding.

Accidents do happen and you may feel you are able to explain the bruise or mark. Rarely, bruising can be related to a health condition which has not been previously identified. Occasionally, bruising in babies is maybe due to a deliberate injury. It is therefore important even where there is a simple explanation for professionals to make further enquiries and ensure each baby is fully assessed to determine the cause.

What happens now?

Everyone working with children must follow the bruising protocol (guidance for staff) when they find a bruise, or a mark which appears to be a bruise, in a non-mobile baby (a baby who is unable to move around on their own).

The professional who has noted the bruise or mark will make a referral to Children's Social Care.

- Your baby's case will be assessed by Children's Social Care. Part of this assessment involves gathering background information from other agencies who may hold information about your family, or other professionals may be working directly with you.

A request will be made for an assessment by the hospital children's Paediatrician within 24 hours.

What will the Paediatrician do?

The Paediatrician will gain your consent to assess your baby which includes gathering information about your baby's health and development. This will include when the bruise was first noticed and whether you know how the bruise may have happened. The Paediatrician will do a full examination which includes undressing your baby. A body map will be completed to show the location, size and severity of the bruise which will remain on your child's medical record.

What further medical tests may be done?

Once the medical examination has been completed following multiagency discussions (e.g. with Social care, police, 0-19 service and paediatrician), there may be a recommendation that further child protection investigations are undertaken.

Blood tests – to look for any underlying health conditions

Skeletal survey and CT head scan – x-rays of all the bones of the body and a scan of the head to look for signs of other injuries. Sometimes when a baby has a bruise on their body, we find signs of other injuries on further investigation. Where x-rays are arranged, some of these will need to be repeated in 2 weeks.

Eye examination – this is sometimes requested to look for any signs of bleeding from the small blood vessels at the back of the eye.

How long will it take?

Where your child is admitted, the tests and gathering information will involve staying in hospital for several days for the full assessment to take place. X-rays are often reported on by specialist radiologists at Sheffield Children's hospital. Please ask ward staff if you need support with food provisions.

What happens next?

The doctor will also explain the outcome of their assessment to the Social Worker and they will decide together what further action is needed.

Where an injury remains unexplained or there is concern that a baby may have been deliberately harmed, a safety plan may be required where someone is with you and your baby all the time while further assessment is completed.

We understand that the assessment may be upsetting and you may feel anxious or worried. All professionals involved will keep you informed of what is happening and treat you with courtesy and sensitivity. If you have any questions, please speak to the professionals working with your family.

Worried about the assessment?

We understand that the assessment may be upsetting and that you may feel anxious or worried. We will keep you informed of what is happening and will treat you with courtesy and sensitivity.

If you do not understand any part of the process and need further explanation, then please ask the professionals involved who can then provide you with more information

How can you make a comment about your child's treatment?

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can help in resolving any concerns you may have with health care being provided Tel **01709 424461**

**Rotherham Multiagency Safeguarding HUB
MASH tel 336080**

**Family Rights Group Tel 08088010366
www.frg.org.uk**

**NSPCC Tel 08088005000
help@nspcc.org.uk**