

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.

### How can I make a comment about mine and my baby's treatment?

You can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Team** for your local NHS Trust by calling **0800 032 0202**

Or contact **children's social care**:

#### GATESHEAD

- Tel: 0191 433 2653
- Out of hours: 0191 477 0844

#### NEWCASTLE

- Tel: 0191 277 2500
- Out of hours: 0191 278 7878

#### NORTH TYNESIDE

- Tel: 0345 2000 109
- Out of hours: 0330 333 7475

#### NORTHUMBERLAND

- Tel: 01670 536 400 (24/7)

### Further information and support:

**NSPCC** National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children  
(NSPCC) [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)



**Family Rights Group**

Family Rights Group

[www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk)



GATESHEAD  
safeguarding  
children  
partnership



**NCASP**  
NORTHUMBERLAND CHILDREN AND ADULTS  
SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP

North Tyneside  
Safeguarding  
Children  
Partnership



Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership

# BRUISING IN YOUNG BABIES

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

**A bruise or other mark has been noticed on your baby.** This leaflet has been provided to explain the procedures that are followed when there are concerns about a possible injury to a young baby. Similar procedures exist across the UK.

### Why are we concerned about bruising to young babies?

Bruising to babies who are not able to move by themselves (i.e. crawling or cruising) is unusual. Sometimes, even when a baby is moving around, there can be concern about how a mark or bruise has occurred.

It is very unusual for babies to get a bruise during everyday activities such as feeding, nappy changes or bathing. Accidents do happen. You may feel you are able to explain the bruise or mark, however, your baby will still need to be carefully assessed.

Rarely, bruising can be related to an underlying medical condition. However, sometimes bruising can be caused through a deliberate injury.

As professionals, we need to work together to investigate all cases in the same way to assess any risks to the safety of a young baby and identify where a family may be in need of additional support. Identifying small injuries to babies and providing their parents with support can prevent more serious harm occurring.

### What happens now?

The professional who has noted the bruise or mark will make a referral to Children's Social Care. A Social Worker will come and meet you and your baby and gather some background information about your family.

They will also contact the local paediatricians to request a medical assessment of the mark or bruise. The Social Worker will go with you and your baby to the hospital where the medical assessment will take place. If that's not possible, they will arrange appropriate transport.

### What does the medical assessment involve?

A paediatric doctor will seek your consent to undertake the medical assessment.

If you do not give consent and if the social worker and/or police feel an examination is in your child's best interest, they will discuss this further with you about next steps.

The doctor will ask you some questions about the mark or bruise and also gather other information about your baby's health and development. They will also ask about your family, including any relevant family medical history.

The doctor will then do a full examination, which includes undressing your baby. The doctor will explain the outcome of their assessment to you and may advise some further medical tests are carried out as well as arranging some photographs of the mark or bruise.

### What further medical tests may be done?

- 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.

### Your consent will be sought before any tests are carried out.

### 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, it is likely that there will need to be a safety plan in place where someone is with you and your baby all the time while further assessment is completed.

Children's Services will ask you to share the names of safe adults who can be with you and your baby and they will ask the police for information about these people to make sure they are safe to help you but they cannot have looked after your baby alone in the past 7 days.

Very occasionally, a decision is made that it is not safe enough for a baby to remain with their parents, even with supervision, but this is very rare.