



# What's Going On?

## **Information for parents and carers**

You have been given this leaflet because a member of staff has come across a bruise on your child.

Any worker who comes across bruising in a child who is not able to move under their own steam (non-independently mobile) are required to refer the child for more investigation.

The child is referred to social care (Children Social Services Department) who will work with the specialist child doctor to decide what needs to happen next

**Q: Why do children who are not mobile with a bruise need to see a specialist doctor?**

**A:** It is rare for children who are not able to move around by themselves to have a bruise. A bruise can be a sign of a health condition, a blood disease or an infection. This means it is important that health advisers ask a specialist child doctor to look

at your child and discuss with you why there might be a bruise.

**Q: Why is bruising in children who are not mobile a concern?**

**A:** It is difficult to cause bruising in non-mobile children with day-to-day activities such as feeding, nappy changing and normal handling. Even where babies fall or get knocked it is unusual for them to bruise (unlike children who are crawling or walking who often get bruises). However, there are also some important causes of bruising which may seriously affect the child's health. The child may bruise easily, for example, due to haemophilia, or be suffering from a blood disease such as leukaemia or an infection such as meningitis. Very occasionally bruising may be due to deliberate injury. Even where there is an apparent simple explanation it is important to rule out these more serious conditions. It also sometimes takes an expert to tell the difference between a

bruise and certain types of birthmark.

**Q: *I understand the reason for seeing a child specialist but why do I need to be referred to social care?***

**A:** 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 to protect the child. Referral to social care 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 where bruising is due to falls and knocks, the family may benefit from advice on accident prevention and home safety.

**Q: *What will the doctor do?***

**A:** An appointment will be made for you to see a child specialist doctor as soon as possible. This may mean attending your nearest hospital or community health clinic. There 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 or x-rays. They will explain to you what they think has caused the bruising. They will also discuss this with social care.

**Q: *What will social care do?***

**A:** Social care will check whether you have received social care from them in the past, they may ask for information from your GP and your health visitor and will make arrangements to speak to you either by phone or in person. This may be at the same time as your attendance with the child specialist or at a separate appointment and 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.

**Q: *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?***

**A:** 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. However 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.