

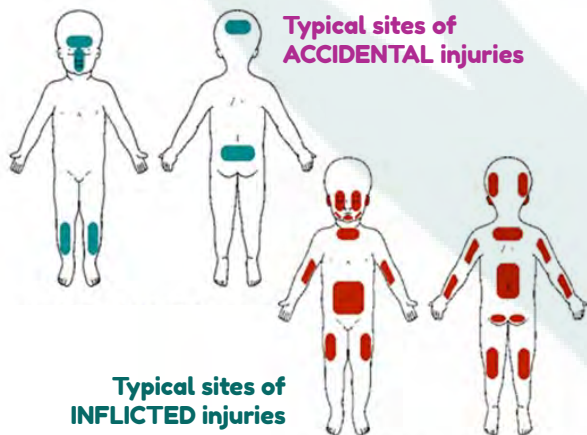
What's the difference between an accidental and non-accidental bruise and when to be concerned.

Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership has produced this leaflet to support professionals and others to identify the difference between accidental and non-accidental bruising in children under 5 years of age.

Where would you expect to see bruising from an accidental injury?

- The shins and the knees are the most likely places where children who are walking, or starting to walk, get bruised.
- Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body – such as the knees and elbows – and are often seen on the front of the body.
- Infants who are just starting to walk unsupported may bump and bruise their heads – usually the forehead, nose, centre of their chin or back of the head.
- Accidental bruising in children with disability is related to the child's level of mobility, equipment used, muscle tone and learning ability.

Typical sites of ACCIDENTAL injuries



Typical sites of INFLECTED injuries

When should you be concerned?

There are some patterns of bruising that may mean physical abuse has taken place.

- Abusive bruises often occur on soft parts of the body – such as the abdomen, back and buttocks.
- The head is by far the commonest site of bruising in child abuse. Other common sites include the ear and the neck.
- As a result of defending themselves, abused children may have bruising on the forearm, upper arm, back of the leg, hands or feet.
- Clusters of bruises are a common feature in abused children. These are often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh, or on the body.
- Bruises which have petechiae (dots of blood under the skin) around them are found more commonly in children who have been abused than in those injured accidentally.
- Abusive bruises can often carry the imprint of the implement used or the hand.
- Non-accidental head injury or fractures can occur without bruising.
- Severe bruising to the scalp, with swelling around the eyes and no skull fracture, may occur if the child has been "scalped" – ie, had their hair pulled violently.
- Corneal abrasions (scratches to the eyeball) that don't heal within a few days/are recurrent/involve both eyes.

Think...

4 Any bruising on a child less than 4 months



"Kids that don't cruise rarely bruise."



Trunck
Ears
Neck

4 years or younger

Frenulum
Auricular area
Cheek
Eyes
Sclera
Patterned bruising

If you work with children and would like to know more, we run **Training for practitioners**, where you can learn more about the difference between accidental and non-accidental bruising. Scan the QR code to find more information.



If you are concerned about the welfare of a child, please contact the **Multi Agency Safeguarding and Support Hub**. You can find the information you need by scanning the QR code.

Download the NSPCC's helpful **Bruises on children** leaflet by scanning the QR code.



View our **Bruising Protocol for Immobile Babies and Children** by scanning the QR code.

View NICE guidelines **Child maltreatment: when to suspect maltreatment in under 18s** by scanning the QR code.

