



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

A child protection medical assessment

Issued by Child Health

building a caring future

HOSPITAL | COMMUNITY | HOME

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

Introduction

This leaflet is to help parents and carers understand when, where and why child protection medical assessments take place. We understand that parents and children sometimes feel anxious or worried about the assessment. Knowing what might happen at the appointment, and talking to your child beforehand can help.

What is a child protection medical assessment?

It is a medical assessment of a child by a paediatrician (children's doctor) because of concerns that something harmful may have happened to a child that was not an accident. It is to make sure that your child is healthy and safe and to look at any injuries they may have. It is an opportunity for you and your child to discuss any concerns you have about your child, and to obtain advice from a paediatrician.

When does a child protection investigation take place?

When anyone receives information that suggests a child has been harmed or might be harmed, they should contact social care or the police. Once social care or the police have this type of information, they cannot ignore it. The law states that they have a duty to investigate. Social care, the police and the medical team are committed to working together with parents and carers to ensure the best outcome for your child.

Where do you see the paediatrician (children's doctor)?

The assessment will take place in a clinic room in the Children's unit at Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital Cramlington. There will be toys and books to play with and we can provide snacks and drinks for your child.

Who will be there?

Your child will be seen by the paediatrician. Sometimes there may be more than one doctor, and a children's nurse or play specialist present. Usually a social worker will be there too, and sometimes the police.

What will happen at the medical appointment?

The paediatrician will explain to you and your child why you are there and may ask you to sign a form consenting to the assessment. The doctor will ask about your child's health, development, home and family, and why you have come. The doctor will then examine your child. This will be an examination of the child's whole body, including chest, abdomen, mouth, ears and throat. Scars or injuries will be measured and documented. Sometimes photographs may be taken. The doctor may need to examine some areas in more detail, such as the back of the eyes or genitalia. This will always be explained in detail. The doctor may need to organise some further investigations and this will also be explained in detail.

What happens afterwards?

At the end of the appointment, the doctor will discuss the assessment with you and the social worker. You can ask any other questions you have about the assessment or other health concerns. If further appointments for your child are needed these will be arranged. The doctor will then write a report which will be shared with other relevant professionals. You will also usually receive a copy. Your social worker will then talk to you about what happens next.

What can you say to your child?

- Be reassuring
- Explain that they are coming to see the doctor to make sure that they are healthy
- Explain to them that they can talk to the doctor about anything they want
- Explain that the assessment is not a test, and that they can't say the wrong thing

Things you might want to bring:

- Your child's red or yellow book (child health record)
- Favourite toys / books
- Snack / drink
- List of your questions for the paediatrician

Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118.

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Text: 07815 500015

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

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General Enquiries 03 44 811 8111

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

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