

SAFEGUARDING UNDER 5'S

Why could children under 5 be more vulnerable than older children?

What are the particular vulnerabilities for infants under 1?

UNEXPLAINED INJURIES TO YOUNG CHILDREN

Physical injuries in young children may be life threatening and/or cause permanent neurological damage.

Research and child safeguarding practice reviews (formally [serious case reviews](#)) highlight that children under 1 year old are especially vulnerable.

Any suspicious (unexplained) injury in a pre or non-mobile and/or pre or non-verbal child must be regarded with extreme concern including:

Minor injuries with an inconsistent explanation;

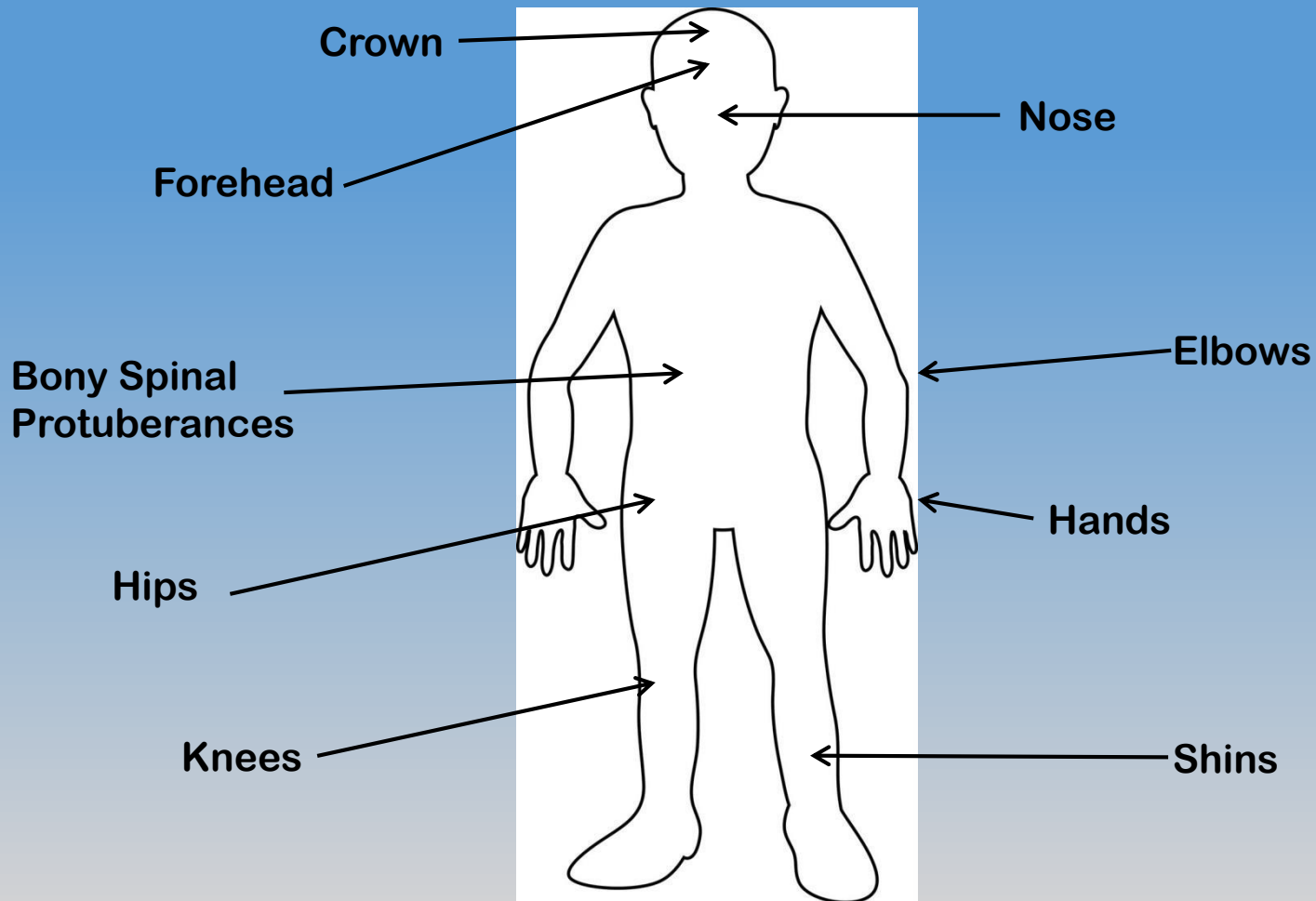
Bruising, especially on the face, eyes,

Head, neck and genitalia

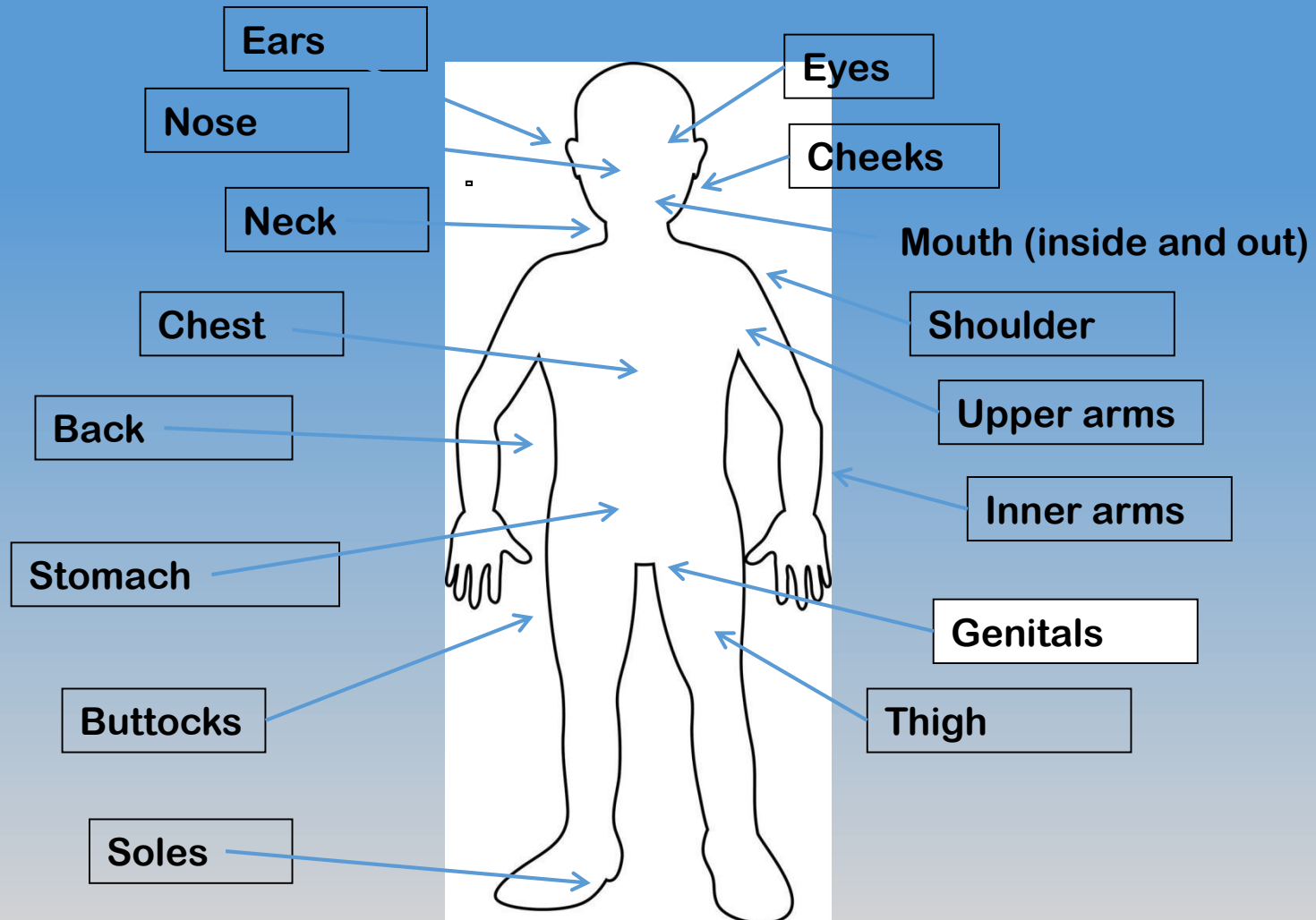
Any fractures;

Any major injury.

COMMON SITES OF ACCIDENTAL INJURY



COMMON SITES OF NON ACCIDENTAL INJURY(NAI)



INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN UNDER 1 FROM NON-ACCIDENTAL INJURY CAUSED BY MALE CARERS

Since July 2018, the Panel has been notified of the death or serious harm of 257 babies under 1 year old through non-accidental injury.

Babies under 1yrs are subject to more serious incidents notified to the Panel, than any other group –35% of the total 482 SI's.

Rapid reviews for these babies often identify the father or male carer as 'invisible' or 'hidden'-yet they are more often likely to be the perpetrator. So, we know the least about the biggest source of risk to babies.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN UNDER 1 FROM NON-ACCIDENTAL INJURY CAUSED BY MALE CARERS

A new report investigating the death or serious harm of 23 babies is calling for Health, Social Care and other relevant services to provide more support to fathers.

It was published in September 2021 by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and looked at the lives of babies who were known or suspected to have been seriously harmed or killed by their father, step-father or male carer.

The Panel recommends that universal, antenatal and perinatal services work with fathers so significant risk factors, such as domestic abuse, substance misuse, and mental health problems, are addressed and the fathers are offered support before the additional stressor of a baby's birth.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN UNDER 1 FROM NON-ACCIDENTAL INJURY CAUSED BY MALE CARERS

“This report indicates that there are systemic weaknesses in how services operate so that too often, fathers remain hidden, unassessed and unengaged. Everyone involved in safeguarding children must give more effective focus to working with fathers who are struggling and whose behaviour and backgrounds may present risk to children. This is vital if we are to protect better very vulnerable babies in the future.”

It is clear the pandemic has intensified some of the ‘hidden harms’ we’ve heard about, bringing the health, safety and wellbeing of children to the fore

Our collective focus is almost exclusively on mother and child and this is crucial, but we must make space for fathers and other male figures in both assessments and offers of parenting support.

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The role of health services are particularly important but there is more we can all do as local leaders, strategic partnerships and frontline professionals, to understand and respond to the needs of men and share our respective insights in order to keep children safe.

The findings suggest that if services routinely found out about, met and supported dads – and worked actively to identify and reduce the risks a small proportion of them pose – more lives could be saved.



The Safeguarding Children Partnerships in East Sussex, Brighton & Hove, and West Sussex launched the ICON campaign in 2020.

ICON aims to support all parents and carers with interventions for comforting and coping with a crying baby. The call for resources comes following infant deaths, and safeguarding practice reviews, where a baby has died or been seriously injured as a result of abusive head trauma.

Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) – also known as ‘shaken baby syndrome’ – causes catastrophic brain injuries, which can lead to death, or significant long term health and learning disabilities. AHT is the most common cause of death or long term disability in babies. 24 out of 100,000 hospital admissions for babies are due to AHT.

In East Sussex, a recent safeguarding practice review involved abusive head trauma.



PROGRAMME

The programme – [ICON: Babies Cry, You Can Cope](#) provides key messages and resources to let parents and all carers know that babies cry to communicate and that there are ways of coping with this crying.

Resources include leaflets and video clips which can be shared with parents and all carers at any contact with midwives, health visitors, GPs, social workers, and other professionals who come into contact with families.

The ICON message can be remembered simply:

- I – Infant crying is normal**
- C – Comforting methods can help**
- O – it's OK to walk away**
- N – Never, ever shake a baby.**

The ICON approach recommends all parents and all carers try and soothe their baby through comforting methods. ICON guidance suggests ways of calming the child before putting them down in a safe environment for a few minutes if the parent is struggling and only as a last resort.

The programme advises, and provides professionals with a toolkit, including a 'crying plan' which they can complete with parents so they can plan in advance who to turn to for support if the crying becomes too much.

ICON always recommends contacting a health professional such as a health visitor, midwife or GP for support with their baby and always recommends that the leaflet is given with a conversation to accompany it. Offer ICON as an alternative to a situation where frustration (often linked to tiredness) can lead to abusive head trauma

