



**Physical abuse is the non-accidental infliction of physical injury to a child.** In most cases, the person causing the abuse is a family member or caregiver. Most often, the person responsible for the abuse may not be able to explain the child's injuries, have inconsistencies in his or her story, or appear unconcerned about the injury.

- > Physical abuse affects children of all racial, economic, and ethnic backgrounds.
- > The parent or caretaker need not have intended to hurt the child for it to constitute physical abuse.
- > Signs of abuse can be subtle.

Physical abuse can be caused by a person's inability to control their anger or frustration. This loss of control is usually caused by factors that have nothing to do with the child, for example, job or personal stresses, loneliness, depression, lack of support, psychiatric disorders, alcohol intoxication or hangover, or substance abuse. It can also be intentional and planned.

Physical abuse of a child may include: striking, slapping, burning, shaking, pinching; pulling hair or an ear. Beating a child with a belt, shoe, or other object. Biting a child; breaking a child's arm, leg, or other bones; burning a child with matches or cigarettes; hitting or kicking a child. Not letting a child eat, drink or use the bathroom; punching them; Scalding a child with water that is too hot. Confining or tying up a child; Holding a child too tightly; not letting them breathe; choking them.

Physical abuse can lead to permanent injury, brain damage and death. Continued abuse may lead to severe psychological problems for the child.

Shaking a baby or young child may cause a condition called shaken baby syndrome, which can result in brain injury and death.

**What do I do if I think someone is abusing a child?**

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused by someone, it is important that you listen to them:

**DO NOT**

- Investigate
- Ask leading questions
- Make promises
- Notify the parents or the care-giver

**DO**

- Provide a safe environment (be comforting, welcoming, listen)
- Tell the child it was not his/her fault
- Listen carefully
- Document the child's exact quotes
- Be supportive, not judgmental
- Tell the truth and make no promises

• Ask **ONLY** four questions

1. What happened?
2. Who did this to you?
3. Where were you when this happened?
4. When did this happen?

- Any other questions should be left to the police.

**Report it**

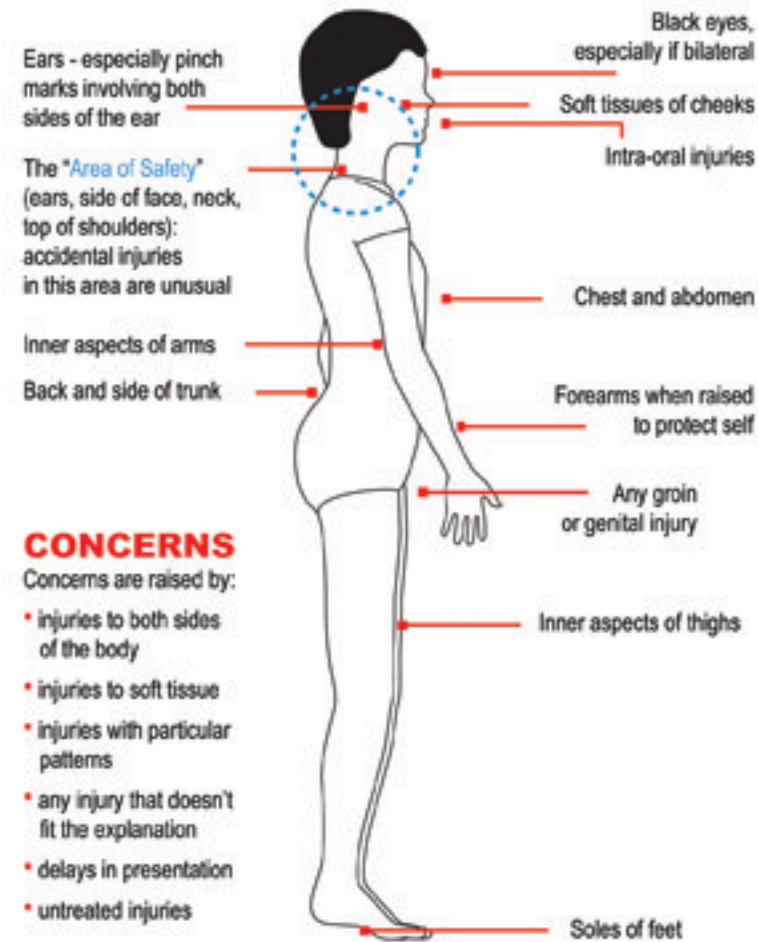
- Call your local Police and Child Protection services agency

Don't hurt your child. Don't let anyone else hurt them either.

**ONE CHILD INTERNATIONAL**

**PHYSICAL CHILD ABUSE WARNING SIGNS**

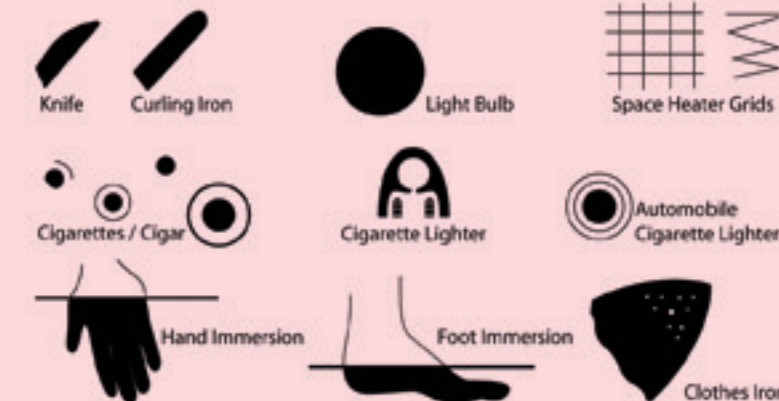
**Suspicious Areas of Bruising**



**CONCERNS**

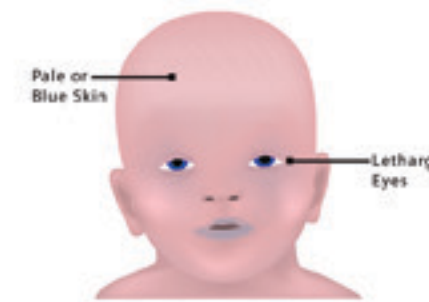
- Concerns are raised by:
- injuries to both sides of the body
  - injuries to soft tissue
  - injuries with particular patterns
  - any injury that doesn't fit the explanation
  - delays in presentation
  - untreated injuries

**Burns**

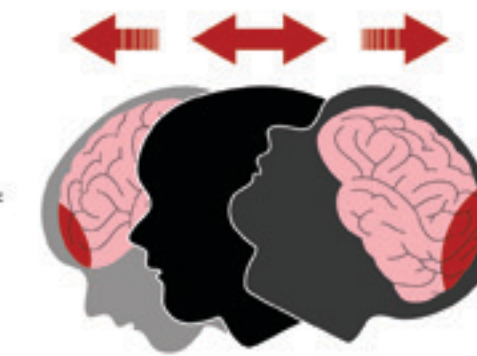


Immersion burns in hot water tend to have a clear line of demarcation between the burned and unburned areas.

These signs can also indicate other serious illnesses or injuries that require emergency medical attention.



Don't shake the baby – ever. Shaking the baby causes bruising and tears to the brain, resulting in brain damage and death.

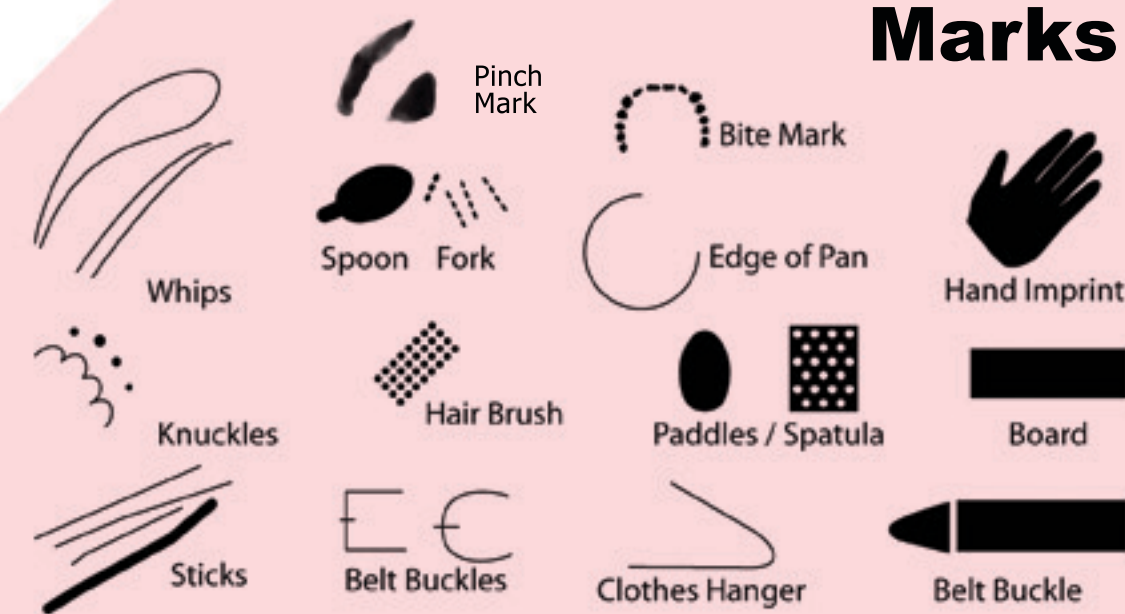


**Shaken Baby Signs:** Inconsolable. Irritability. No smiling or vocalization. Poor sucking or swallowing. Rigidity or posturing. Difficulty breathing. Seizures. Head or forehead appears larger than usual or soft-spot on head appears to be bulging. Inability to lift head. Inability of eyes to focus or track movement or unequal size of pupils.



**INDICATORS OF ABUSE**

**Marks**



Bruises or marks in various stages of healing are indicators that abuse may be present.

**LEARN HOW TO PROTECT A CHILD HERE**



United States/South America/Canada  
[www.abusewatch.net](http://www.abusewatch.net)

Ireland/UK/Europe  
[www.abusewatch.eu](http://www.abusewatch.eu)

Africa, Australia and New Zealand  
[www.abusewatch.info](http://www.abusewatch.info)

**'A child seldom needs a good talking to as a good listening to.'** - Robert Brault

One Child International  
**SPEAKING OUT FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T - CHILDREN.**

[www.1child.net](http://www.1child.net)