

Bumps, bruises and accidents

Almost all young children have injuries and accidents at some point. Most will be minor, but it's sensible to know what to do if the accident or injury is more serious.



Start by learning some basic first aid or revise what you already know. The British Red Cross, St John Ambulance and your local NHS Ambulance Service run first aid courses (see our first aid page). The British Red Cross has interactive first aid information online. Your health visitor or local children's centre may also run courses.

If an accident happens

It can be difficult to know when to call an ambulance and when to take your child to the Accident and Emergency department (A&E). See the guide at the end of this leaflet for general advice. If you're worried about your child's injuries and not sure if they need medical help, call your GP or the 111 service where available. If you're unsure whether you should move your child, make sure they're warm and safe from further injury, then call an ambulance.

Objects in the nose or ears

If your child has something lodged firmly in their nose or ear, leave it where it is. If you try to remove it, you may push it further in. Take your child to the nearest accident and emergency department. If their nose is blocked, show your child how to breathe through their mouth.

Cuts

If there's a lot of bleeding, press firmly on the wound with a clean cloth, such as a tea towel or flannel. If you don't have one, use your fingers. Press until the bleeding stops. This may take 10 minutes or more. Don't use a tourniquet or tie anything so tightly that it stops the circulation.

If possible, raise the injured limb. This will help to stop the bleeding, but don't do it if you think the limb might be broken. If you can find a clean dressing, cover the wound. If blood soaks through the pad or dressing, leave it there and put another pad or dressing over the top. It's very unusual for a wound to bleed so much that there's serious blood loss.

An ambulance isn't usually needed, but if the cut keeps bleeding or there's a gap between the edges of the wound, go to accident and emergency. If there is a possibility of a foreign body (e.g. a piece of glass) being in the cut, go to A&E.

If your child's immunisations aren't up to date, ask your GP or the hospital whether they should have a tetanus jab.



For more information, help and support go to www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk or visit NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk

Choose the right care

Swallowing poisons

If you think your child has swallowed pills or medicines:

- Unless you're absolutely sure, spend a minute or two looking for the missing pills.
- If you still think your child has swallowed something, take them straight away to your GP or hospital, whichever is nearest.
- Take the full set of tablets with you so that the doctors can check the labelling and calculate how much your child may have taken.
- If possible, write down the name of whatever you think your child has swallowed so that you can tell the doctor.
- Don't give your child salt and water, or do anything else to make them sick.

If you think your child has swallowed household or garden chemicals:

- Calm your child down as much as you can (this will be easier if you stay calm yourself). Act quickly to get your child to hospital.
- If possible, write down the name of whatever you think your child has swallowed so that you can tell the doctor.
- If your child is in pain or there's any stinging, soreness or blistering around their mouth, they have probably swallowed something corrosive (something that burns). Give them milk or water to sip in order to ease the burning and get them to hospital quickly.

If your child looks pale and/or feels unwell after an accident, lie them down. Keep them covered up and warm, but not too hot. If your child feels faint, get them to keep their head down and, ideally, to lie down. The faint feeling will wear off in a minute or two.

Electrocution

Always turn off the power before approaching your child. If this isn't possible, push the child away from the source of the shock with a wooden or plastic object, such as a broom handle. Try gently stimulating your child by tapping their feet or stroking their neck and shouting 'hello' or 'wake up'. If you get no response from your child, call 999 immediately.

Broken bones

If you think your child's neck or spine may be injured, call an ambulance. Don't move them. Unnecessary movement could cause paralysis. A bone in your child's leg or arm may be broken if they have pain and swelling and the limb seems to be lying at a strange angle.

If you can't easily move your child without causing pain, call an ambulance. If you have to move your child, be very gentle. Put one hand above the injury and the other below it to steady and support it (use blankets or clothing if necessary). Comfort your child and take them to hospital.

If your child is in pain, you can give them painkillers even if you're going to the Accident and Emergency Department. Follow the dosage instructions on the label.



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Choose the right care

What to do next...



Choose care at home if...

- Your child has a minor injury - most bumps, bruises, cuts and grazes can be safely treated at home



Choose your GP if...

- Your child's injury doesn't seem to be getting better
- You think a cut or graze might be infected
- Your child has a fit for the first time, even if they seem to recover



Call 999 A&E if...

- Your child stops breathing
- Your child is struggling for breath (for example, you may notice sucking in under the ribcage)
- Your child is unconscious or seems unaware of what's going on
- Your child won't wake up
- Your child has a fever and are persistently lethargic despite having paracetamol or ibuprofen
- Your child is having difficulty breathing (breathing fast, panting or are very wheezy)
- Your child has severe abdominal pain
- Your child has a cut that won't stop bleeding or is gaping open
- Your child has a leg or arm injury and can't use the limb
- Your child has swallowed a poison or tablets



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Choose the right care