Basics of Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting

Child Abuse Classifications:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Psychological abuse
- High Risk Environment (Exposure to domestic violence, substance abuse, dangerous situations)

Common Presentations of Child Abuse and Neglect: History

- Injury that is unexplained by history
- Injury that is developmentally not possible
- Absent, changing, or evolving history
- Delay in seeking medical care
- Inappropriate affect of the caregiver
- Triggering event that precipitates a loss of control in the caregiver

Common Presentations of Child Abuse and Neglect

- Drug/toxic ingestions
- Failure to thrive
- Fracture in patients under 2 years of age
- Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns
- Intracranial or intra-abdominal injury without sufficient accidental history
- Rectal or vaginal injury with no clear accidental cause

Risk Factors for Abuse and Neglect

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Parental involvement with LEA
- Head of family unemployed
- Domestic violence
- Heavy child care responsibility
- New baby/pregnancy
- Inadequate housing
- Parental history of abuse as child

Domestic Violence and Child Abuse

- There is a strong correlation between domestic violence and child abuse
- Children exposed to violence are often as traumatized as those who are directly abused
- In Oregon, it is now a crime for a parent to expose a child to domestic violence
Oregon State Law
(ORS 419B.005 – 419B.050)

“Any public or private official having reasonable cause to believe that any child with whom the official comes in contact has suffered abuse, or that any person with whom the official comes in contact in an official capacity has abused a child shall report or cause a report to be made...”

Anyone making a good faith report based on reasonable grounds is immune from liability

Your name as the reporter can be released only by court order.

Reports made by phone to:

Oregon DHS
Multnomah County Child Abuse Hotline
503-731-3100

Documentation

- Document completely in a fact oriented, neutral manner
- Include name, date, and time of any statements or concerning behaviors
- Be sure to document location, size, and characteristics of all visible injuries.
- Use of a body map or diagram is helpful.
- Request that medical photography be ordered for large or multiple visible injuries.

Physical Abuse: Associated Findings

- Cutaneous Trauma
- Skeletal Trauma
- Head Trauma (including retinal findings)
- Abdominal Trauma

Cutaneous Trauma
Skeletal Trauma
Head Trauma (including retinal findings)
Abdominal Trauma
Common Sites of Bruises

- **Inflicted**
  - Soft Tissue Bruises
  - Buttocks
  - Lower Back
  - Inner Thighs
  - Genital Area
  - Cheeks
  - Tongue, Mouth
  - Earlobes
  - Neck

- **Accidental**
  - Bony Prominences
  - Exposed Areas
  - Elbows
  - Knees
  - Shins
  - Chin
  - Forehead

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Photo documenting Cutaneous Injuries: “Karly’s Law”

- By Oregon Law, all visible physical injuries must be photographed immediately.
- The photographs must be reviewed by a specially trained Child Abuse Expert within 48 hours.
- 2nd most common manifestation of abuse
- 43% unsuspected at time of evaluation
- 50% children with fracture due to abuse have more than one fracture
- Rib fractures and/or metaphyseal fractures in 90% child abuse fatalities

**Skeletal Trauma**

**Classical Metaphyseal Lesion (CML)**
Sexual abuse occurs when a child is engaged in sexual activities:
- That the child cannot comprehend
- For which the child is developmentally unprepared and cannot give consent
- And/or that violate the law or social taboos of society

Medical Neglect
- A refusal or failure to seek, obtain or maintain necessary medical, dental or mental health care.
- Includes withholding medical treatment from children who have disabilities and life-threatening conditions.
If you have questions about whether or not to report, call your local DHS office to consult with them. Sometimes different people have different information about a child. You might be the second or third person to call about a particular child.

**Referral Resources: Inpatient**

- Doernbecher Children's Hospital: Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) Team
  - Phone: 503-418-8208
  - Pager 503-494-8311 pager 14097

**Referral Resources:**

- CARES Northwest, Washington & Multnomah Counties: 503-276-9000
- Oregon Network of Child Abuse Intervention Centers, for all other counties: www.childabuseintervention.org
- Visit the State of Oregon website at www.oregon.gov/DHS/children/abuse