

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

General Risk Factors for Child Abuse and Neglect

- History of drug or alcohol abuse within the family
- Severe stress - economic, lifestyle, or as a result of disasters
- Lack of a support network or isolation (e.g. single parent families; few close friends; no relatives nearby; geographic isolation; inability to, or fear of, interacting with neighbors)
- Other forms of family violence within the home (spousal or partner abuse, abuse or neglect of elders)
- History of a parent having been abused as a child

Warning Signs

- Repeated injuries, or injuries in various stages of healing
- Inappropriate behavior
- Neglected appearance or hygiene
- Parents that are extremely strict or super-critical of the child

Some Conditions That May Mimic Abuse

- Accidental injuries, typically in similar stages of healing
- Birthmarks: Do not heal and disappear, although they may fade after many years
- Bullous impetigo: Staph or strep infections that respond to antibiotic regimens
- Folk medicine remedies, such as cupping, coin rubbing, or moxibustion, most common in families of Southeast Asian or Central American heritage
- "Port-wine stains" typical of Sturge-Weber Syndrome: Do not change or disappear
- Slate-gray spots of infancy (formerly "Mongolian spots"): Fade gradually over several years
- Epidermolysis bullosa, an auto-immune disease
- Idiopathic thrombocytopenia purpura, may cause large contusions due to little or no injury
- Hemophilia - clotting disorders with possible subcutaneous hemorrhage, often around joints
- Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome - congenital disorder resulting in improper collagen formation
- Menke's Syndrome - genetic disorder of copper metabolism resulting in friable hair

This listing is not meant to be all-inclusive, but is designed as a general guideline to the proper identification of child abuse or neglect. Clinicians are encouraged to seek additional information that will lead to proper diagnosis of suspected abuse or neglect.

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