

### What is physical abuse?

Physical abuse:

- Is harm or the threat of harm to a child.
- Is caused by someone caring for a child.
- Can include injuries such as bruising, burns, broken bones, head injury or internal injuries.

### Why does my child need a medical exam?

It is important for your child's health and well-being that their body be checked.

- Your child may have injuries or other medical problems that need treatment.
- A medical opinion may be needed to help tell if the injuries were caused by:
  - an accident.
  - abuse.
  - By law, doctors and nurses must report abuse to child protective services or the police.

### What happens during the exam?

The exam is very much like a regular check-up. It is done in a child-friendly way with a caregiver in the room when possible.

- Questions about your child's health are asked.
- A head-to-toe check-up is done.
- Your child's skin is checked for injuries or marks. If there are any, the medical staff may ask how it happened.
- Photos may be taken to document any injuries. These photos are kept very secure. They may be used to investigate abuse or in court.
- X-rays or other tests may be ordered. This may include blood tests to check for medical problems.

### What happens after the exam?

- After the exam, medical staff will:
  - Talk to you about the exam
  - Enter information into your child's medical chart. The police officer or social worker working on the case will have access to the medical report. Your child's doctor will also have access to the medical report.
- A social worker or police officer may meet with you to discuss any safety concerns.
- Results from lab tests or imaging will be available within one week. A health care provider will contact you if any result is abnormal.

### After the exam continued

- Follow-up care visits or referrals for counseling will be made, if needed.
- An interview of your child may be needed. This is done by a social worker or police officer with special training.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.**