

# AAP advises doctors on how to identify child abuse

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(HealthDay)—The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has just released new guidance to help primary care doctors recognize the signs of child abuse. The clinical report was published online April 27 in *Pediatrics*.

"Minor injuries in [children](#) are incredibly common, and most are not the result of abuse or neglect," lead author Cindy Christian, M.D., past chair of the AAP Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect, said in an agency news release. "But sadly we also know how common it is for physicians to miss cases of [child](#) physical abuse. When these injuries are not correctly identified, children often return for medical care later with more severe or even [fatal injuries](#)," she explained.

Examples of possible cases of abuse include multiple fractures or fractures in infants who are not crawling or walking and have no known medical conditions. The report also offers advice about head injury in infants, which could be caused by shaking or blunt impact. Identifying abuse-related injuries in infants and toddlers can be especially difficult, the report authors noted. Along with guidance on identifying abuse-related injuries, the report also outlines how doctors can protect children from abuse.

"Pediatricians can serve as effective advocates for funding and implementation of evidence-based prevention programs in their communities, as well as at the state and national level. Pediatricians can also partner with home-visiting and parenting programs in their community," the authors write. "Finally, recognizing [abuse](#) and intervening on behalf of an abused child can save a life and can protect a vulnerable child from a lifetime of negative consequences."

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