

Safeguarding in the Dental Practice

Every member of the dental team has a duty to recognise concerns and report them.

Abuse can come in many ways:

-  **Physical** (i.e unexplained cut, bruises)
-  **Emotional** (i.e withdrawn, aggressive, extreme anxiety)
-  **Sexual** (i.e difficulty sitting or walking, inappropriate sexual knowledge)
-  **Domestic** (i.e repeated facial injuries, frightened, delay in seeking treatment, partner answers questions for patient.)

Signs of Neglect:

- Poor oral hygiene despite repeated advice
- Untreated dental disease
- Missed appointments without explanation
- Multiple treatments under GA
- Patient brought in only when in pain
- Malnutrition

Accidental injuries typically:

- Involve bony prominences like forehead, nose, chin, elbows, knees, shins
- Match the history
- Are in keeping with the development of the child

Non-accidental injuries typically:

- Affect both sides of the body
- Soft tissues affected like lips, cheeks, abdomen, groin, inner aspects of thighs.
- Don't match with history
- Delay in presentation
- Untreated injuries

Who should you report to?

Follow your practice safeguarding policy.

Inform your practice safeguarding lead and dentist in charge.

In case of immediate danger **call police**.

Follow **local procedures** for referral.

You do not investigate concerns.

Your responsibility is:

-  **Recognise**
-  **Respond**
-  **Record**
-  **Report**

References:

Public Health England (2019). Safeguarding in general dental practice. A toolkit for dental teams. Available at:

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