



What happens if your doctor is worried about your child being safe?

If a doctor is worried that a child or a young person is not safe, they need to do something. For example, they might think the child or young person is being **abused** or **neglected**. This means bad things might be happening to them and they could get hurt.

It can be upsetting for the family if the doctor thinks this is happening and they might have to ask the parents a lot of questions to find out more. The doctor has to keep the child or young person safe.

Things the doctor will do if they think your child is not safe

Every situation is different. The doctor might not decide what to do straight away. The doctor will work with you to make sure your child gets the right care and support. They might talk to another person they work with first. This might be another doctor or nurse. They might get some help and advice from them before they decide what to do. Most of the time they will not tell this person your name or the name of your child.

If they still think your child is being hurt or is not safe, they will have to tell another service that works with children. This might be at the **local social services** or the **NSPCC**, which is a charity.

Talking to you before the doctor does anything

Your doctor should tell you that they are worried about your child staying safe and they should tell you what they are going to do about this. However, they might not tell you if they think worse things will happen to your child if you know what they are going to do.

The doctor should:

- be honest and tell you what they think
- listen to what you have to say
- keep an open mind about what they think might be happening to your child.

Asking if you agree the doctor can share information about your child

Most of the time the doctor will ask you to agree that they can tell other people about your child. If they think **more** harm will come to your child by doing this, they might not ask you first. Most of the time doctors will not share information about you or your family unless you say they can. But sometimes doctors have to tell other people things to stop children and young people from getting hurt.