

One minute guide

Unintentional Injuries in the Under 5's

What are unintentional injuries? Aren't they just the same as accidents?

- ✚ The term 'accident' is used to describe an event that is unintended and that may or may not lead to injuries
- ✚ Accidents are predictable events and are frequently preventable
- ✚ They are predictable because we know who is most likely to have an accident, and why, where and when an accident is most likely to happen
- ✚ The term 'unintentional injuries' helps families and professionals understand that accidents are preventable
- ✚ It helps dispel the myth that they just happen and there is nothing we can do about them.
- ✚ We all have a role to play in reducing the rates of unintentional injury

Why is it important to reduce rates of unintentional injury?

- ✚ Unintentional injuries, particularly those in and around the home, are a leading cause of preventable death for children under five years old and are a major cause of ill health and serious disability
- ✚ The effects of an injury can be devastating and can have a major impact on long-term health, educational, social, emotional and occupational outcomes

- ✚ The reduction of unintentional injuries in childhood is an important public health priority
- ✚ Rates of unintentional injury in North Yorkshire are high
- ✚ Recent data shows that they are **significantly worse** than the England average and our closest statistical neighbours – and **this gap is widening**

What are the most common unintentional injuries?

The 5 most common reasons for hospital admissions for children under 5 years old are:

- ✚ Choking/suffocation & strangulation
- ✚ Falls
- ✚ Poisoning (in particular poisoning from medicines)
- ✚ Burns and scolds
- ✚ Drowning

Unintentional injuries for the under-fives tend to happen in and around the home.

They are linked to a number of factors including:

- ✚ Child development
- ✚ The physical environment in the home
- ✚ The knowledge and behaviour of parents and other carers (including literacy)
- ✚ Overcrowding or homelessness
- ✚ The availability of safety equipment
- ✚ New consumer products in the home

What can I do to reduce unintentional injury rates?

- ✚ Have an awareness of unintentional injuries as an issue when working with families
- ✚ Consider the likelihood and prevention of these in your assessment of the family's needs
- ✚ Keep up to date with the evidence based guidance and information to share with families
- ✚ Raise the issue at every opportunity with families, for example in one to one contacts or group sessions
- ✚ Consider working through the locally developed 'Confident Parent, Safer Children' booklets with the family or the 'Home Environment Assessment Tool'.
- ✚ If you are concerned about the safety of the home environment, consider liaising with the local housing provider, and requesting a North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service fire safety check
- ✚ If you have reason to believe that a toy might be in breach of toy safety regulations, you can contact your local Trading Standards office

What might make a child more at risk of an unintentional injury?

Children can be at a greater than average risk of unintentional injury if they:

- ✚ Are under the age of 5 years (generally, under-5s are more vulnerable to unintentional injuries in the home)
- ✚ Are over the age of 11 (generally, over-11s are more vulnerable to unintentional injuries on the road)
- ✚ Have a disability or impairment (physical or learning)
- ✚ Live within a family on a low income
- ✚ Live in accommodation which potentially puts the more at risk, including factors such as multiple occupied housing and social and privately rented housing

Where can I find more information about unintentional injuries?

- ✚ The [Child Accident Prevention Trust](#) website has lots of useful information on preventing unintentional injuries. Professionals can also register to receive guidance and updates via email
- ✚ The [ROSPA](#) website also has useful information and resources for practitioners and families around unintentional injury prevention
- ✚ The [Injury Prevention Briefing](#). Preventing unintentional injuries to the under-fives: a guide for practitioners has lots of evidence based information and practical ideas for professionals working with families on the issue of unintentional injuries
- ✚ National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance:
 - ✚ [Unintentional injuries in the home: interventions for under 15s](#)
 - ✚ [Unintentional injuries: prevention strategies for under 15s](#)