

Learning to Negotiate a New World

An Osteopath's Perspective

The first twelve months of your baby's life is an incredible time of growth and development. In just one year your baby has transformed from a completely helpless newborn into an independent little person.

An important element of being a one year old is moving! Whether it be crawling (6-10 months), pulling up on furniture (7-10 months) or walking (10-18 months). It is important to remember that children are unique and meet milestones at their own pace. Development guidelines simply show what your child has the potential to accomplish; if you have any questions about your child's development just ask your health practitioner.

First steps represent a huge developmental leap. Walking requires muscle strength, coordination, balance and a certain level of emotional maturity. However another part of your baby being mobile is the accidents, falls, bumps and bruises. As a parent, you are no doubt always watching for hazards and dangers in your baby's life. Unfortunately, despite all your efforts to keep your baby accident free, they are still bound to wind up with bumps from the misadventures that it seems only little ones can find.

When should I seek medical attention after a fall?

While the vast majority of baby bumps and bruises heal quickly and usually just need a cuddle and maybe an ice pack, some falls are causes for concern.

If your baby has any of these symptoms go straight to A&E:

- Strange behaviour
- Loss of consciousness
- Bleeding you are unable to stop with pressure

- Signs of a broken bone: including obvious deformity of a limb or not weight-bearing on the injured limb
- Prolonged screaming or crying that is unusual for your baby.
- Concussion – persistent vomiting, excess sleepiness. Look at changes in crawling/walking, dizziness, weakness or confusion.
- Signs of brain injury: change in pupil size or unusual eye movements

It can be of benefit for your child to have an osteopathic assessment at 12 months or following a fall, especially if they impacted their head or have fallen onto their sacrum/bottom. Although children have an amazing ability to “bounce back” some trauma can cause compression and strains in the body which can go on to cause problems with growth and development.

Osteopathic treatment is a hands-on therapy requiring five years of clinical training and a developed sense of touch. Osteopaths will ascertain any restriction or tensions in the baby’s musculoskeletal and nervous system and gently release them in a safe and gentle manner.

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