



Bumps & Boo-Boos: The Soothing-First Decision Tree

A calm, parent-first reference for the moment after she falls.

First — take a breath

Most cruising-stage bumps end in a startled cry, a cuddle, and being back to playing within 90 seconds. The instinct to panic is normal. The instinct to scoop and soothe is right.

This card walks through what to do, in order, for the most common bumps. It is not medical advice. If you're worried, trust that worry — call your GP, paediatrician, or NHS 111 (UK) / a nurse line (US) / poison control if relevant.

The 30-second triage

When she falls, in the first 30 seconds:

1. **Pick her up gently.** Skin-to-skin if possible.
2. **Look at her face.** Is she crying? Crying means she's responding — that's good.
3. **Check the impact spot.** Just look. Don't poke.
4. **Speak softly.** "You're okay. I've got you. That was a big one."
5. **Distract.** Move to a different spot. Show her something interesting.

Most of the time, that's the whole moment. She'll be back to cruising within 2 minutes.

The "kiss-it-better" bumps

These are the everyday cruising-stage falls that look scary in the moment but settle within minutes.

**You'll see:**

- A red mark, possibly a small lump
- Crying for under 2 minutes
- Back to playing or tracking your face within 5 minutes

Soothe:

1. Cuddle, skin-to-skin if possible
2. A cool (not frozen) compress for a minute or two — a clean wet flannel works
3. Distraction — a song, a book, her favourite toy
4. Calm voice. Your tone is the medicine.

No further action needed. Watch her for the next hour for any change in behaviour.

The "wait-and-watch" bumps

These need monitoring for 24 hours, but usually don't need a doctor.

You'll see:

- A larger lump or visible bruise
- Crying for 5-10 minutes
- A bit clingy, or wanting more cuddles than usual
- Eats and sleeps roughly normally afterwards

Soothe:

1. Same as above — cuddles, cool compress, distraction
2. Note the time and the bump
3. Watch her for the next 24 hours for any of the "call the doctor" signs below

She's probably fine. But you check in on her properly tonight when you do the bedtime routine.

The "call the doctor" bumps



These are the moments where you stop, soothe, and pick up the phone.

Call your doctor or paediatrician promptly if, after a fall:

- She's vomiting (more than once)
- She's unusually drowsy or hard to wake
- She's not responding the way she normally does to her name, your face, or a familiar toy
- One side of her body is moving differently than the other
- Her eyes look unfocused or pupils look uneven
- She's crying inconsolably for 30+ minutes
- Bleeding that won't slow down with gentle pressure

Call emergency services (999/911) immediately if:

- She loses consciousness, even briefly
- She has a seizure
- She stops breathing or her breathing becomes irregular
- She's bleeding heavily and gentle pressure isn't slowing it
- She has clear fluid coming from her nose or ears after a fall

Trust your gut. If something feels off — even if she doesn't fit any of the bullets above — call. Doctors and nurses would rather you call once unnecessarily than not call when you should have.

After-care: the next 24 hours

For any bump beyond a quick kiss-it-better:

Tonight:

- Wake her once during your usual sleep check, just to confirm she rouses normally
- Note any changes in feeding, mood, or sleep pattern
- Trust your instincts more than any checklist

Tomorrow:

- Most bumps look smaller and bluer the next day — that's healing, not worsening
- A bump that's getting *bigger* or *more tender* on day 2 is worth a GP check



- A child who seems back to their usual self is showing you everything is fine
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10 soothing moves that actually work

When tears come, in rough order of effectiveness:

1. **Skin-to-skin cuddle.** Your heartbeat is the fastest soother she has.
 2. **Calm voice.** "You're okay. That was a big one. I've got you."
 3. **Cool flannel** on the bump for a minute or two
 4. **Walking + bouncing** — the rhythm calms her vestibular system
 5. **A song she knows.** Lullabies, the alphabet, anything familiar
 6. **Distraction object** — a favourite toy, a phone showing a video she loves
 7. **Out the door.** A 30-second stand outside resets her completely
 8. **Boob, bottle, or snack** if she's old enough — comfort feeding is fine
 9. **Naming the feeling.** "That hurt. You bumped your head. It's okay to cry."
 10. **Sit on the floor next to her.** Sometimes she just needs you at her level.
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Print this. Stick it on the fridge.

When the bump happens, you don't want to be searching the internet. You want a calm, scannable card. That's what this is.

You're the medicine. The card is just the receipt.

— *NoBooBoos*