# Child Abuse

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… Suppose your patient, a sixteen- year old boy, tells you that he started a fight with his classmate at school and that he punched the other boy in the nose, causing profuse bleeding and a broken nose. Must you report this as child abuse? The answer depends upon the law in your state. In some states, this would not be reportable. Although it is generally the case that abuse of a child can be perpetrated by anyone (including a minor), some state laws contain language to the effect that a mutual affray between like-aged minors does not constitute reportable child abuse. Check the law in your state. Remember, a failure to report child abuse can have serious consequences for a mandated reporter. On the other hand, confidentiality is the general rule, unless a report is required or permitted.