

## What is Shaken Baby Syndrome?

A child's brain and body can be injured when he or she is shaken. Children as old as five years have died from these injuries.

## What causes the shaking?

Usually, a caregiver gets upset with a baby's crying. The caregiver loses control and shakes the baby.

## Who shakes children?

Anyone could shake a child, even a mother, father or childcare provider. Studies show that, in most cases, a baby is shaken by the father or by the mother's boyfriend.

## What happens when a child is shaken?

Shaking can cause:

- Brain Injury
- Cerebral Palsy
- Blindness
- Learning and Behavior Problems
- Seizures
- Paralysis
- Death

## How can I prevent these injuries?

- Never, ever shake a child.
- Make sure that everyone who cares for your child knows not to shake him or her.
- Always support your baby's head and neck when holding him or her.
- Always play gently with your baby.
- Learn what to do when your baby cries.

## Signs and Symptoms of Shaken Baby Syndrome

- Extreme irritability
- Rigidity
- Lethargy
- Seizures
- Decreased appetite
- Dilated pupils
- Feeding problems
- Difficulty breathing
- Vomiting
- Blood spots in eyes
- Poor muscle tone
- Coma

## Do you think your child has been shaken?

If so, seek proper medical care immediately. Prompt medical attention can save your child's life.

## What can I do to make my baby stop crying?

All babies cry a lot during the first few months of life. Crying does not mean that your baby is being bad or that your baby is angry with you. Sometimes, babies just need to cry.

## To calm a crying baby:

- Check to see if your baby is hungry, is too hot or too cold, or needs a diaper change.
- Check to see if your baby is sick or has a fever.
- Feed your baby slowly and burp often.
- Rock your baby.
- Give your baby a pacifier or let your baby breastfeed.
- Play soft music, sing or hum to your baby.
- Take your baby for a ride in a car or stroller.
- Let your baby cry it out.

## If nothing seems to work:

- Place your baby in a safe place, like a crib or playpen, and take a time out.
- Take a deep breath and count to ten.
- Call a friend for support.
- Call your doctor, your baby may be sick.

## To Report Child Abuse or Maltreatment in New York State Call:

New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Reporting Center  
(800) 342-3720

### Child Abuse Support and Resource Centers:

Prevent Child Abuse  
New York Parent Helpline  
24 hrs - 7 days/wk  
(800) 342-7472

Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention Plus  
(800) 858-5222

National Information, Support, and Referral Service on Shaken Baby Syndrome  
(888) 273-0071



State of New York  
Department of Health

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