

## How to Help Yourself!

If you feel yourself losing control, **gently** put the baby down.

Then, try some of the following tips to take care of your own needs:

- Let your anger out in a safe way. Shake a rug, do dishes or laundry, scrub a floor, beat a pillow, or just sit down and have a good cry. It's okay to feel frustrated—as long as you don't take it out on the baby.
- Calm down. Take several deep breaths, count to 100, put yourself in a time-out chair until you're calm.
- Stop and think about why you feel so angry. Is it the child or is he just a convenient target for your anger?
- Sit or lie down, close your eyes, think of a pleasant place in your memory for several minutes.
- Call a friend, relative, or neighbor to talk about your frustration or see if someone can take over for a while.
- Do something for yourself. Listen to soft music, exercise, take a shower or bath.
- Write down the ten best things about yourself. Write down the ten best things about your child.
- Contact Prevent Child Abuse Illinois at (217) 522-1129 or visit [www.preventchildabuseillinois.org](http://www.preventchildabuseillinois.org) for additional child care and parenting resources.

**Remember that crying doesn't hurt a baby—shaking does!**

This brochure is part of a statewide campaign supported by:  
Caterpillar, Inc.

GFWC Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs

Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

Independent Order of Foresters

Tender Loving Care

Warrior Insurance Group

Campaign material writing and design provided by Abbott Laboratories.

*Produced and distributed by:*

**PREVENT CHILD ABUSE ILLINOIS**

The state chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America

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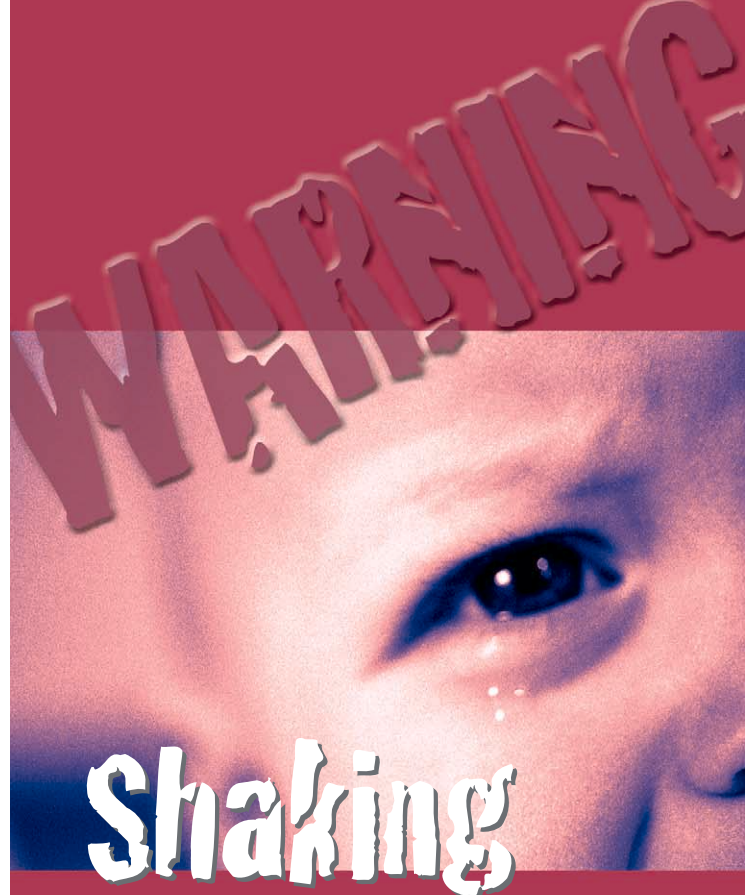
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[www.preventchildabuseillinois.org](http://www.preventchildabuseillinois.org)



**Prevent Child Abuse  
Illinois**



**Shaking  
a baby can be  
DEADLY**

**Make sure  
no one shakes  
your baby**

*How do you calm a crying baby?* Many parents and caregivers are frustrated when nothing seems to work. As a result, your child could be unintentionally injured, or even killed.

This brochure explains Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) and how to keep your baby safe. Share this information with anyone who cares for your baby—friends, relatives, babysitters, child care providers, brothers and sisters, and especially anyone who has little or no experience caring for babies or children.

**Make sure that everyone who cares for your child knows about the dangers of shaking. Tell them to *never* shake your baby—you could save your baby's life.**

## Shaken Baby Syndrome

Shaken Baby Syndrome occurs when an infant or young child is shaken

vigorously. Infants three to six months old are the most frequent victims, although Shaken Baby Syndrome can affect children of any age.

Head trauma is the most frequent cause of permanent damage or death among abused infants and children—and shaking accounts for a significant number of those cases. Babies' neck muscles are weak and their brains and connective tissues are fragile and underdeveloped. When a baby is shaken, the brain bounces within the skull, causing bruising, bleeding, and swelling inside the baby's brain.

## Shaking Can Be Deadly

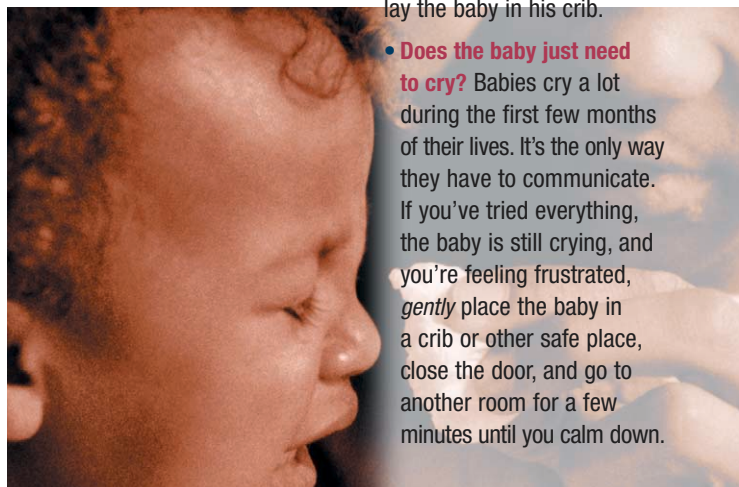
One out of four babies who are shaken dies as a result of being shaken. Other life-long injuries can occur, including:

- brain damage leading to mental retardation
- speech and learning disabilities
- spinal injury and paralysis
- cerebral palsy
- seizures
- hearing loss
- partial or total blindness
- broken bones and dislocations

## How to Help A Crying Baby

Taking care of a baby can be difficult and frustrating. Often, the biggest challenge is trying to figure out *why* the baby is crying. The following questions can help you find out. Post this list in your baby's room as a reminder to everyone who cares for your baby.

- **Does the baby need to be fed or burped?** Feed him slowly and burp him often.
- **Does the baby need to be changed?** Check her diaper to see if it needs to be changed or loosened.
- **Is the baby too hot or too cold?** Feel the baby's head for perspiration or coolness. Add or remove clothing and blankets, as needed.
- **Does the baby seem to have a fever? Does he seem to be in pain from an earache, teething, rash, or insect bite?** Call your doctor or health clinic for advice.
- **Does the baby need to suck?** Guide her fingers or a pacifier to her mouth.
- **Does the baby need to feel close to you?** Babies need to be held often. Touching and cuddling help a baby develop both physically and mentally.
- **Is the baby overtired or overstimulated?** Turn off extra noise like the television or radio. Lower the lights. *Gently* lay the baby in his crib.



- **Does the baby just need to cry?** Babies cry a lot during the first few months of their lives. It's the only way they have to communicate. If you've tried everything, the baby is still crying, and you're feeling frustrated, *gently* place the baby in a crib or other safe place, close the door, and go to another room for a few minutes until you calm down.

**Shaking a baby can be DEADLY**

*Make sure no one shakes your baby*