

How to Help Yourself

If you're feeling overwhelmed, it's okay to take a break. Gently place your baby in a safe space like a crib and take a moment to care for yourself.

- When strong emotions come up, try releasing them in a safe way. Shake a rug, do dishes or other household chores, squeeze a stress ball, or simply let yourself have a good cry. It's okay to feel frustrated—what matters is finding safe ways to cope, especially when caring for your baby.
- Calm down. Take several deep breaths, count to 100, put yourself in a time-out chair until you're calm.
- Pause and ask yourself: What's really causing this stress? Sometimes anger feels big, but it may not be about the baby.
- 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 little while.
- Do something for yourself. Listen to soft music, exercise, take a shower or a bath.
- Write down the ten best things about yourself. Write down ten best things about your child.
- Contact Prevent Child Abuse Illinois at 217-522-1129 or visit www.preventchildabuseillinois.org for additional childcare and parenting resources.



Do all you can to protect your child.

The #1 trigger for Shaken Baby Syndrome is frustration with baby's crying.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME (SBS) VISIT:

- National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome
www.dontshake.org
- The Shaken Baby Alliance
www.shakenbaby.org
- Prevent Child Abuse Illinois
www.preventchildabuseillinois.org



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WWW.PREVENTCHILDABUSEILLINOIS.ORG

Protect Your Baby

Learn How to Prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome



What is Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) or Abusive Head Trauma (AHT)?

Crying can be stressful, and it's normal to feel frustrated when nothing seems to soothe your baby. But it's important to remember—there are safe ways to cope. In moments of stress, a baby can be unintentionally harmed, sometimes with tragic consequences.

This brochure will help you understand Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) and how to keep your baby safe during those difficult moments. Please share this information with everyone who cares for your baby—friends, family members, babysitters, childcare providers, and especially anyone new to caring for infants. A little knowledge can make a big difference in protecting your child.

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 are the most frequent victims, although Shaken Baby Syndrome can affect children at any age.

Head trauma is the most frequent cause of permanent damage or death among abused infants and children - and shaking accounts for 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.

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.



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

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 injury leading to intellectual disability
- speech and learning disabilities
- spinal injuries and paralysis
- cerebral palsy
- seizures
- hearing loss
- partial or total blindness
- broken bones and dislocations



Shaking a baby can be DEADLY

Make sure no one shakes your baby