

## What is Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS)?

When anyone shakes a baby or young child, the brain and body are seriously injured. Some children die from this type of abuse.

## Why does SBS happen?

Most people who shake a baby in their care are not trying to hurt the child. They may become frustrated by nonstop crying, difficulty feeding a baby, or problems toilet training. Outside stresses like money, work, or personal relationships can add to this frustration. Adults may get so upset that they lose control and shake the baby.

It is important to understand that crying is normal! Crying is how babies communicate. They may be too hot or cold, want attention, be tired or hungry, or need a diaper change. If your baby is crying, check all of these things first.

### Caring for a baby is stressful!

It is normal to feel frustrated and overwhelmed sometimes. If you get upset, there are things you can do for yourself and the baby that can help you cope.

### - Anyone may shake a child, -

even a mother, father, or babysitter. Make sure to share this important information on Shaken Baby Syndrome with anybody who cares for your child.

## What happens when a child is shaken?

When a baby or young child is violently shaken, the head rolls back and forth, causing his or her brain to hit the skull. This causes swelling and bleeding of the brain – even the eyes can bleed.

It only takes a few seconds of shaking to cause permanent damage to a child.

Shaking can result in:

- Permanent brain damage
- Blindness
- Seizures
- Cerebral palsy
- Paralysis
- Developmental disability
- Death (1 in 4 die)

## 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.
- Learn what to do when your baby cries.

## Signs and Symptoms of Shaken Baby Syndrome

- Extreme irritability
- Baby is very stiff or like a rag doll
- Lethargy
- Seizures
- Not eating or poor appetite
- Dilated pupils
- Feeding problems
- Difficulty breathing
- Vomiting
- Blood spots in eyes

If you think your child has been shaken, call 911 or bring your baby to the nearest emergency room immediately. Getting medical attention right away could 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.

## If nothing seems to work:

- Put the baby in his or her crib with the sides up, close the door, and walk away.
- Do something to relax: take a bath or shower, watch TV, listen to music.
- Sit down, close your eyes, and take deep breaths.
- Call a friend or family member to talk.
- Have someone come over to give you a break.



No baby has ever died from crying – it is better to let babies cry than to risk hurting them!

## 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 (800) 244-5373  
(Trained specialist available  
9 a.m. to 10 p.m., voicemail  
available after hours)

National Center on  
Shaken Baby Syndrome (801) 447-9360

Share the information in this brochure with anyone who cares for your baby. Let them know that it is okay to ask for help, and that they should call you if they get frustrated.



Follow us on: [health.ny.gov](http://health.ny.gov)  
[facebook.com/nysdoh](https://facebook.com/nysdoh)  
[twitter.com/HealthNYGov](https://twitter.com/HealthNYGov)  
[youtube.com/nysdoh](https://youtube.com/nysdoh)

never

ever

shake

a baby



# Shaken Baby Syndrome