

What is Shaken Baby Syndrome?



Shaken Baby Syndrome is a condition that occurs when a baby is **shaken violently**. Shaking is a potentially *fatal* form of child abuse.

If a baby is shaken with force, it can lead to a lifetime of problems:

- Shaking can *damage* a child's brain.
- Shaking can cause *permanent disabilities* like blindness or paralysis.
- Shaking can even cause *death*.

Never, never shake a baby! Shaking can damage your baby's brain and may cause death. No child, at any age, should be shaken.

When babies cry, you may want to cry too...This is normal!

Being a parent or caregiver is not easy. A baby's constant crying can be stressful and can be a dangerous trigger for you. Sometimes there is no reason for the baby crying, and there is nothing you can do.

A baby crying is normal

Here's what you should know about crying babies:

- Most babies cry often: 80-90% of babies have crying spells lasting 20-60 minutes or longer. This does not mean that your baby has colic.
- Most babies cry more at night, sometimes for an hour or longer.
- Most babies have at least one fussy period each day, often in the evening.
- Most babies cry more at 6-8 weeks than at birth.
- Most parents or caregivers will feel angry, frustrated and will cry themselves.
- In the first 5-6 months, it is normal for a baby's crying to increase in intensity, and the baby may not be consolable.

Sometimes it is okay to put the baby in the crib and let the baby cry for a short time to give yourself a break. Try to call someone for help during these stressful times.

For more information call *Your Health Connection* at the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 (toll free).