

Why Is Shaking a Baby Dangerous?

Babies are resilient, but infants and young children have certain qualities that can make shaking particularly damaging. Some of these characteristics include:

- Larger head compared to body
- Fragile, undeveloped brain
- Drastic size and strength difference between victim and perpetrator

Violently shaking a baby forces the head to whip back and forth, causing blood vessels in the brain and eyes to tear and bleed.



SHAKING MOTION

Possible consequences of shaking a baby or young child can include:

- Blindness
- Seizures
- Learning disabilities
- Physical disabilities
- Death



Myths About Shaken Baby Syndrome

Shaking an infant can cause bleeding within the child's brain and eyes, and massive brain swelling. The injuries of shaken baby syndrome occur when a child is violently shaken. Everyday handling of a child, playful acts or minor household accidents do not cause the forces necessary to create these injuries. Shaking injuries are NOT caused by:

- Bouncing a baby on your knee
- Tossing a baby in the air
- Jogging or bicycling with a baby
- Falls off furniture
- Sudden stops in a car or driving over bumps

NEVER SHAKE A BABY!

If you need to talk to someone call

Military OneSource 24/7 at

1-800-342-9647

www.militaryonesource.com

*National Center on
Shaken Baby
Syndrome*

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Infant Crying Patterns

Listening to a crying baby can be very frustrating, but it is comforting to know that infant crying patterns are predictable and do eventually come to an end. Common infant crying patterns include:

- Crying that tends to increase and peak around two - three months of age
- Crying that occurs more often in the evenings
- Crying that can continue for long periods of time, 30-40 minutes, with no apparent reason
- Crying that is intense, but does not necessarily mean that your infant is in pain. Although it looks the same, babies often cry when they're not in pain
- Crying that continues despite the soothing efforts of caregivers
- Intense crying periods that come and go



Remember

If your otherwise healthy baby cries often, it doesn't mean there is something wrong with the baby or you.

What Your Baby's Crying Does To You

Even the most kind and loving caregiver can feel frustrated by a crying baby. These feelings don't make you a bad parent or caregiver. Feeling frustrated is very normal. If you feel yourself losing control, put the baby in a safe place, and take a moment to take care of yourself.

- Take a break from the sound
- Call a good friend
- Take a warm, soothing bath
- Listen to music
- Exercise



Remember

No healthy baby has ever died from crying, but they have died from being shaken.

What You Can Do

Caring for a baby can be a wonderful experience, but it can also be very frustrating when the baby won't stop crying. The following tips can be used to comfort your crying baby.

- Give the baby a warm bath
- Have the baby listen to and watch running water
- Turn up the volume slightly on a radio or CD player
- Take the baby outside or for a walk in the fresh air
- Take the baby for a ride in the car
- Dance with the baby



Remember

These tips won't work every time. Find other ideas and ask for help if you need it.

Please . . . NEVER Shake A Baby Or Young Child!

You may feel overwhelmed with all possibilities. These responsibilities may be difficult if your spouse is deployed or you are on your own support system. It is important for you to focus on yourself, even for a few minutes a day.

1. Are Feeling

During the period of peak infant crying, remember to care for yourself and your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. As a primary caregiver, you may experience

- feeling resentful toward your baby.
- feeling that your baby's father is not around enough.
- feeling that you are unable to handle parenting alone.

You Do?

Your baby's immediate needs, then put your baby in a safe place and walk away. Come back and check on the baby, but give yourself some time to rest and relax. Try the following:

- Read a book
 - Listen to relaxing music
 - Take a phone break
 - Exercise
 - Take a nap
- If you have a responsible person watch the baby, you can have a break. You can also find help from many military programs and resources.

Shaken Baby Syndrome

What Is Shaken Baby Syndrome?

Shaken baby syndrome (SBS) is a form of child abuse that occurs when an infant or young child is violently shaken. The shaking may only last a few seconds, but it can cause severe brain damage, even death. Shaken baby syndrome usually occurs when a frustrated caregiver loses control with a crying baby.

What Injuries Are Caused By Shaking?

Violently shaking a baby forces the head and brain to whip back and forth, causing the brain to swell and blood vessels in the brain and eyes to tear and bleed. These injuries can cause learning disabilities, seizures, paralysis, coma, blindness and death.

What Doesn't Cause Shaken Baby Syndrome?

Shaking injuries require massive, violent force and are NOT caused by bouncing a baby on your knee, tossing a baby in the air, running, jogging or bicycling with a baby, falls off furniture or down stairs, and sudden stops in a car or driving over bumps.

NEVER SHAKE A BABY!

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5 Things Every Good Mom Should Know

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#2 Understanding Common Crying Myths

More than just a powerful way to get your attention, crying is an important part of your baby's healthy development. All babies go through a period when they cry a lot, usually when they are two to three months old. During this time, babies cry mostly in the evening, often with no apparent cause. The crying may last more than 30 minutes and may continue no matter what you try to do to soothe your baby.

Myth Of The Spoiled Baby

Mothers may feel like they are spoiling their new baby if they respond to their crying every time. You cannot spoil a baby less than six months old. During the first six months, it is very important for your baby's early development that you respond to his distress and try to comfort him. Even if nothing you do will calm him down, it still gives him the secure feeling that you will be there for him.



Myth Of The Bad Parent

Constant crying will quickly become very frustrating. Mothers may think they are a bad parent if they cannot soothe their crying baby. Your baby's crying does not mean that you or your spouse are doing something wrong. Both of you remember that crying is a perfectly healthy part of your baby's development and that all babies go through a time when the crying increases.

#3 Boosting Your Baby's Brain Power



You wouldn't know it from watching her, but your baby's brain is working harder now than at any other time in her life. While most organs are fully developed at birth, your baby's brain development is just beginning. The brain grows as she gains experience with new people and environments. The development in the brain made during the first three years will help determine how your baby will learn, think and behave for the rest of her life.

Mother's Role In Early Brain Development

This early brain activity makes it very easy to give your baby what she needs to develop a healthy, powerful brain. Expensive or educational toys are fine, but what your baby really needs is time with you. Basic activities with your baby such as holding, talking and making eye contact are important to her early brain development. So, just spending time with your baby, helping her discover the world around her, is the best thing for her. The little things you do with your baby now will not only boost her brain power, but will also help build a special bond between the two of you.

All babies cry and need to be comforted, but if you've done everything you can ... **REMEMBER: It's OK to let your baby cry, but it's NEVER OK to shake him!**

#4 Managing Deployment

For mothers, the deployment of a spouse can be especially difficult when infants and young children are in the home. There are things you can do to prepare and ease the stresses and worries of how deployment will affect the children. Focus your efforts on keeping dad "part of the family" by doing the following:

- Tape record or video record dad reading a bedtime story or singing a favorite song and play the recordings at the same time day/night. "Daddy is going to read you a bedtime story!"
- Take photos and create magnets, placemats and other mementos then display them and have the kids interact with the photos to include dad in their lives.
- Have dad write notes to the kids and give them out on special occasions or hard days.
- Remember, if you are struggling with being left alone, take time for yourself, to relax and de-stress.

After Deployment

It may take some time for everyone to adjust after deployment ends. You may feel like you need a break, but it is important to remember that dad hasn't been around the kids in a long time and they may all need some time before being left alone together. If a child was born while he was away, make sure he is comfortable with the baby before leaving them alone. No matter what challenges you face upon being reunited, remember, you made it through the hardest part and you're together again!

TIPS ON SOOTHING A CRYING BABY

Crying Bouts

- The number one reason parents or caregivers shake babies, causing death or severe disability, is inconsolable crying.
- Dr. Ron Barr coined the acronym "PURPLE CRYING" to remind parents/caregivers that all babies at some time have inconsolable crying bouts.

P: Peaks around two months

U: Unpredictable, often happening for no apparent reason

R: Resistant to soothing

P: Pain-like expression on baby's face

L: Long bouts, lasting 30 to 40 minutes or more

E: Evening crying is common

Meet the Infant's Basic Needs First

- Feed the baby
- Burp the baby
- Change the diaper
- Make sure clothing isn't too tight
- Make sure baby isn't too hot or too cold



If All Else Fails and You Suspect the Baby Is Ill, Has a Fever, Swollen Gums, etc, CALL A DOCTOR

- Increasing the amount of carrying, comforting, walking or talking can reduce crying by 50%. **If you feel you cannot take the crying, put the baby down in a safe place, take a break from the crying, and NEVER SHAKE A BABY!**
- Be patient, take a deep breathe and count to 10
- Call a friend or relative whom you can trust to take over for a while, then get away, get some rest, and take care of yourself

Ways to Soothe a Crying Baby

- Take the baby for a walk outside in a stroller or for a ride in the car seat
- Lower any surrounding noise and lights
- Offer the baby a noisy toy; shake or rattle it
- Hold the baby and breathe slowly and calmly; the baby may feel your calmness and become quiet
- Sing or talk to the baby in soothing tones, sit and rock
- Record a sound, like a vacuum cleaner, or hair dryer

RESOURCES

Military ONE SOURCE call 1-800-342-9647 Available 24/7

Contact your local Army Community Service or visit
www.myarmylifetoo.com

National Center for Shaken Baby Syndrome: www.dontshake.com