



IT's Not OK to Shake BABIES

Remember, there is no such thing as a perfect parent. Parenting is not easy.

Every parent feels stressed at times and can feel angry with a child from time to time, but it is important to keep your baby safe.

Please NEVER SHAKE YOUR BABY

- Babies are very easily damaged by shaking because their heads are large compared to their bodies, and their necks are weak. They don't have the control needed to stop their head jerking backward and forward when shaken and brain injury can easily occur.

The Horrible Effects

- A baby's brain is very fragile. It is softer and moves inside the skull more than an older child or adult's brain. So when a baby is shaken the brain is easily bruised and

damaged. This can cause delayed physical and mental development and even death.

- Children under one year are particularly at risk. Older children can also be hurt if shaken hard.
- NEVER toss your baby in the air or swing your baby around. Anything that causes rapid, uncontrolled movement of a baby's head should be avoided
- Shaking can badly frighten a baby as well as seriously hurting it.
- If you think your baby has stopped breathing, shaking may only cause more harm. (Do a FIRST AID course so that you know what to do!)
- STOP AND THINK - YOUR BABY IS TOO PRECIOUS TO SHAKE

Your Baby won't stop crying

If your baby has been crying for what seems like forever and you've tried feeding, changing and comforting the baby and nothing seems to help, it may be hard for you to resist the urge to shake the baby.

No matter how angry you feel, please don't shake your baby!!

When do babies cry?

All babies cry sometimes. However finding out what a baby needs is not always easy. They may be:

- ❖ Hungry - Tired - Wet
- ❖ Uncomfortable - too hot or too cold
- ❖ Upset or scared
- ❖ Unwell - teething, have a temperature, or wind (colic)
- ❖ Lonely - sometimes your baby just wants to be picked up and cuddled.

(Did you know normal babies cry up to two or three hours each day?)

If baby has been fed and changed and cuddled but still won't settle, here are some other ideas:

- Try another feed - your baby may still be hungry

- Gently rub or massage the baby
- Offer a dummy - sucking is a comfort for most babies
- Walk or rock the baby snuggled up close to your chest so the baby can feel your heartbeat, patting on the nappy can be soothing too
- Take the baby for a walk in the fresh air
- Sing or talk to the baby
- Wrap the baby in a small soft sheet so he/she feels secure
- Try settling your baby in a quiet, dark place
- Put your baby in a pram and rock the pram
- If your baby is very unsettled see your doctor or child health nurse to make sure there is nothing wrong.

If your baby is still crying.....

If all of this fails, wrap the baby in a small cotton sheet and put the baby in the cot on his/her back. Leave the room. Give yourself a chance to calm down. Try telephoning a friend or relative who may be able to help.

If you are still worried, contact:

- Your doctor or a hospital if possible
- Your child and youth health nurse
- A parent help line
- Or look through community HELP pages in your local directory

REMEMBER: You are not alone in rearing your baby. Help is available - don't be afraid to ask. We all need help sometimes and your children are precious - CARE FOR THEM WITH LOVE.