



## Shaken Baby Syndrome



Shaken baby syndrome refers to the brain injury sustained by an infant from being violently shaken or hit against an object. The injury occurs because his neck muscles are still weak, and his head is large and heavy. When shaken, the baby's brain bounces from side to side, hitting with the skull. This causes bruising, swelling, and bleeding that reduces the amount of oxygen reaching the baby's brain, causing severe and permanent brain damage or death. It can also cause fractures in different parts of the body such as the skull and ribs. Most of the time, this happens when the parent or caregiver is tired, upset, or upset because the baby won't stop crying.

### Signs and symptoms of a baby who has been violently shaken:

- Cries uncontrollably and is irritable
- Cool, pale, or bluish-colored skin
- Lack of appetite or vomiting
- Weakness, lethargy, or difficulty waking up and moving around
- Spots or bleeding in the eyes
- Bulging in the top and soft part of the head
- Seizures or coma
- Difficulty breathing

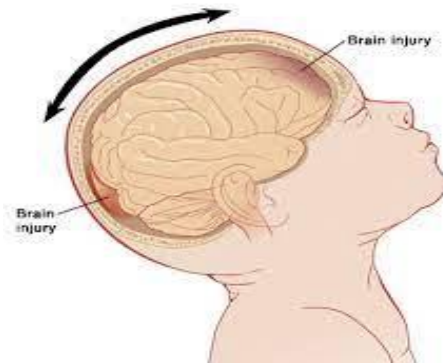
### Diagnosis:

- X-rays, MRI, or CT scan to check for fractures, bruises, internal bleeding, or other injuries.
- Eye exam to reveal if there is bleeding or other injuries to the eyes.
- Blood tests to rule out other diseases.

### Treatment:

- Medications to reduce brain swelling and prevent seizures.
- If the baby has trouble breathing on his own, he will be put on a ventilator.

- Surgeries to relieve pressure caused by fluid buildup or bleeding in and around the brain.



### Babies who survive shaking may have problems that require lifelong medical care, such as:

- Visual loss or blindness
- Hearing loss
- Seizures
- Developmental delays
- Speech, learning and behavior problems
- Difficulty with memory and concentration
- Cerebral palsy
- Weakness or difficulty moving in certain parts of the body
- Hormonal problems

Because of the baby's crying, anyone caring for the baby can become frustrated, scared, upset, or feel tired and overwhelmed. If those emotions do not stop and become violent, it can put the infant's life at risk. Under the laws of Puerto Rico, Shaken Baby Syndrome is classified as child abuse, even if it is caused accidentally.

**Recommendations if the baby does not stop crying and you already feel discomfort:**

- Stop, do not shake, or hit the baby.
- Put him in a safe place and leave the room.
- Call a friend or family member so she can



talk about how she feels. If possible, ask that person to come to your home to care for the baby while you

calm down.

- If you have no one to turn to, call the 9-1-1 system or the PAS line at 1-800-981-0023.
- Once he is calmer, go back to the baby and try to comfort him so that he stops crying.
- You can put him in the car and give him a ride, even within the same house.

**Ways to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome:**

- Never shake a baby, even when playing.
- Carefully choose the people who will care for the baby.
- If possible, have someone assist you for at least the first three months of your baby's birth.
- If you identify that you are losing patience or if feelings of hatred or rejection towards

the baby appear, seek help immediately with a professional human behavior.



**Social and Emotional Aspect**

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can deal with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after your pregnancy process, please visit your doctor or contact the following telephone lines:

**Medical Advice Line**

1-844-347-7801

**TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804**

**References:**

*Shaken Baby Syndrome.* (2021). Retrieved from: <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007578.htm>

*Abusive Head Trauma (Shaken Baby Syndrome).* (2021). Retrieved from:

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/shaken.html#:~:text=It%20happens%20when%20someone%20shakes,permanent%20brain%20damage%20or%20death.>

Prepared by Licensed Health Educators.

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