



If the crying wears you out or upsets you, separate yourself from the baby for a while. Put the baby in her crib, leave the room, and shut the door. If possible, ask someone else to take over comforting the baby. Then, call someone to talk to, or do something you find relaxing.

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# Don't Shake a Baby!

**Shaking a baby  
can cause severe  
injury or death!**

## The Dangers

Please don't shake your infant. Shaking a young child can cause brain damage or spinal injuries that result in:

- Death
- Blindness
- Mental Retardation
- Seizures
- Learning Disabilities
- Cerebral Palsy
- Paralysis

## The Don'ts

People who shake their infants don't mean to hurt them. Some shake their children to interrupt what seems like endless crying. Others are playing with their children. So, play it safe and remember the **Don'ts**:

**Don't** shake a baby.

**Don't** toss a small child in the air.

**Don't** bounce a baby on your knee or swing him on your foot.

**Don't** spin a child around.

**Don't** "crack the whip" by swinging a child by the ankles.

## The Always Do's

- Support your baby's head while holding, playing with, or transporting her.
- Hold and cuddle the baby to show you love him.
- Make sure anyone who handles your baby knows the dangers of shaking.
- If you suspect the baby has been injured through a fall, playing, or accidental shaking, go to a doctor immediately.
- Learn what to do if your baby won't stop crying.

## Why Babies Get Injured by Shaking

Shaking a young child has a different effect than it does with an adult, or even a 10-year-old.

This is because a young child has a large, heavy head, weak neck muscles, and a brain that is still developing.

The brain has not yet fully developed its outer protective layer, so it can be injured more easily. And, the space between the brain and skull is larger, so the brain can travel farther, gaining more speed before impact with the skull.

Shaking a baby causes a whiplash effect. The brain strikes the inside of the skull as the baby's head rapidly moves back and forth.

The brain starts bleeding, causing pressure that damages the tissue. The result can be permanent brain damage.

In other cases, shaking has damaged the spine or caused broken bones or dislocations.

## When the Baby Cries

When your baby cries, remember that this is the way she communicates with you. Please be patient and see what your baby needs. Try the following:

- Pick up the baby and comfort her.
- Check the baby's diaper and change it if wet or soiled.
- See if the baby is too hot or too cold.
- Burp the baby.
- Feed the baby slowly and burp the baby often.
- Offer the baby a pacifier.
- Take the baby to a quiet room.
- Hold the baby against your chest and walk or rock him.
- Take the baby for a ride or put her in a baby swing.

