

# Prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome.

- Babies need attention most of the time.
- Babies cry because they can't talk.
- Some babies cry more than others.
- It is all right to feel frustrated when a baby won't stop crying.
- It is NOT all right to shake a baby to stop the crying.
- Babies cry. Have a plan.

Create your own crying plan at:  
[www.cryingplan.com](http://www.cryingplan.com)

Other helpful resources:  
[www.arkansasctf.org](http://www.arkansasctf.org)  
[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)  
[www.dontshake.org](http://www.dontshake.org)



**Arkansas Department of Health**  
*Keeping Your Hometown Healthy*

4815 West Markham  
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[www.healthy.arkansas.gov](http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov)

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UAMS Center for Children at Risk



## What You Should Know About Shaken Baby Syndrome



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## What is Shaken Baby Syndrome?

- It is a serious brain injury.
- It often occurs when a baby is forcefully shaken, causing the brain to move about inside the skull.
- Shaking is often done out of anger or frustration with a baby who won't stop crying and can't be soothed.
- It is a form of child abuse that can be prevented.

## Symptoms of Shaken Baby Syndrome

- Limpness or lethargy
- Trouble breathing
- Poor sucking or swallowing
- Irritability
- Seizures or trembling
- Vomiting
- Pale or bluish skin
- Unresponsive/will not wake up

**All babies cry.** Some cry more than others. Babies cry because they can't talk and need to say they are hungry, wet, sick, or hurting. Babies sometimes keep crying even when we try to comfort them. Shaking a baby won't stop the crying and may cause brain damage or death.



**Don't panic.  
Have a plan.**

## How to Cope with Your Crying Baby

It's important to have a CRYING PLAN that you (or anyone watching your baby) can follow when the crying starts.

### Check your baby's basic needs:

1. Is it time to eat?
2. Does he/she need to burp after eating?
3. Is it time for a diaper change?
4. Is the baby too hot? Too cold? Overdressed?
5. Are there any signs your baby is sick? (fever, vomiting) Seek medical care if you have any concerns about your baby's health.

### Try soothing your baby:

- Hold your baby close and rock, walk or sway side to side while standing.
- Offer a pacifier (don't force).
- Swaddle him/her with a blanket.
- Play soft music or a quiet sound.
- Take your baby for a walk in a stroller or a ride in a car seat.

If your baby is not sick or hurt, but continues to cry, remember:

## IT IS NEVER OK TO SHAKE A

**BABY. IT IS OK** to put your baby in a safe place (crib, infant seat) and let him cry while you take a break, or call a friend or family member for help.

**It is more important to stay calm than to stop the crying.**

## Calm yourself, so you can calm your baby safely:

- Go outside for fresh air.
- Take several deep breaths.
- Count to 100.
- Wash your face or take a shower.
- Exercise. Do sit ups or walk up and down the stairs a few times.



## Choose your baby's caregivers wisely:

**Before leaving your baby with anyone, ask yourself these questions:**

- Does this person want to watch my baby?
- Is this person good with babies?
- Will my baby be in a safe place with this person?
- Have I gone over my **CRYING PLAN** with this person?

## Do NOT leave your baby with anyone who:

- Is impatient or annoyed when your baby cries.
- Says your baby cries too much.
- Will become angry if your baby cries or bothers them.
- Might treat your baby roughly because they are angry with you.
- Has a history of violence.
- Has lost custody of their own children because they could not care for them.
- Uses drugs or alcohol.