

Welcome to the Wonderful World of Parenthood

We all want to be good parents or caregivers with happy, healthy and well-behaved children. However, sometimes caring for a child is not easy. This leaflet offers some helpful tips on safe, positive ways of caring for your baby. It also explains why rough handling, especially shaking a baby or a child, is dangerous and can cause serious injuries, possibly even death.

Why is it so dangerous to shake a baby?



A baby's head is big and heavy compared to the rest of their body. Unless supported, the head flops around because the neck muscles aren't yet strong enough to hold it still. When a baby is shaken his head is thrown back and forth very quickly with great force. This force causes tiny blood vessels inside the baby's brain to tear and bleed, resulting in one or more of the following injuries:

- blindness
- fits
- learning difficulties
- deafness
- brain damage
- death

Injuries caused by shaking don't happen accidentally during normal play, so you shouldn't stop cuddling, playing and doing all the things your baby really enjoys.

Why would anyone shake a baby?

The major reason that babies are shaken is due to the build up of frustration by a parent or caregiver in response to a crying baby.

When do babies cry?

Crying is one of the ways babies can tell us how they feel or what they need.



However, finding out what your baby needs is not always easy.

They may be:

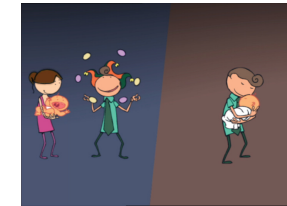
- **UNCOMFORTABLE** - too hot or cold?
- **HUNGRY**
- **UPSET OR SCARED**
- **UNWELL** - teething, wind or be running a temperature
- **LONELY** - sometimes your baby will just want to be comforted



How to cope with a Crying Baby "Step Back, STOP and Think!"

If you have made all the obvious checks (hunger, change, thirst) and your baby just won't stop crying, try:

Another FEED - your baby may still be hungry



Sing or talk to your baby

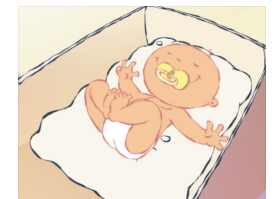
Take your baby for a walk in the fresh air



Rock your baby close to your chest so the baby can feel the beat of your heart

Gently rub or massage your baby

Offer your baby a dummy (if you use one)



Wrap your baby in a small soft sheet so the baby feels secure and try to settle your baby in a safe and quiet place

If your baby is still crying and you are feeling stressed....

Wrap your baby in a small soft sheet and place on his / her back in the cot. Then leave the room.

Crying will not harm your baby. Do something to take a break from the sound:

- Listen to music
- Watch TV
- Have a quick shower
- Call a relative or friend, let someone know how you feel.

Check your baby at least every 10 minutes if crying continues.

ASKING FOR HELP IS A SIGN OF COPING

If you are still worried about your baby's crying or general health, talk to your Doctor, Midwife or Health Visitor.

REMEMBER:

**No matter how upset you feel,
SHAKING YOUR BABY
IS JUST NOT THE DEAL!**

Where you can turn for help

Your GP is
Phone number:

Your Midwife is
Phone number:

Your Health Visitor is
Phone number:

To find your local children's centre contact:

- ♦ Call Derbyshire 0845 605 8058
- ♦ Derby Direct 01332 642611

Helplines

- ♦ NHS ☎ 111
- ♦ Cry-sis ☎ 08451 228 669
www.crysis.org.uk
- ♦ Family Lives ☎ 0808 800
www.family.lives.org.uk
- ♦ NSPCC Helpline ☎ 0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk
- ♦ Samaritans ☎ 08457 90 90 90
www.samaitans.org.uk



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