

SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME

Shaken baby syndrome is a type of traumatic brain injury that is inflicted when someone intentionally and violently shakes a baby. A baby has weak neck muscles and a large, heavy head. Shaking makes the baby's fragile brain bounce back and forth inside the skull, causing bruising, swelling, and bleeding; this can lead to permanent, severe brain damage or death. The typical injuries resulting from shaken baby syndrome are bleeding in the brain, bleeding in the retina of the eye, damage to the spinal cord and neck, and fractures of the ribs and bones. These injuries may not be immediately noticeable. Symptoms of shaken baby syndrome include extreme irritability, sluggishness or weakness, poor feeding, breathing problems, convulsions, vomiting, and pale or bluish skin. Shaken baby injuries usually occur in children younger than 2 years old, but may be seen in children up to the age of 5.

Emergency treatment for a baby who has been severely shaken usually includes life-sustaining measures such as breathing support and surgery to stop internal bleeding and/or bleeding in the brain. Doctors may use brain scans to make a more definite diagnosis.

In comparison with accidental traumatic brain injury in babies, infants suffering from shaken baby syndrome have a much worse chance of recovery. Damage to the retina of the eye can cause blindness. The majority of infants who survive severe shaking will have some form of neurological or mental disability, such as cerebral palsy or mental retardation, which may not become fully apparent prior to the child reaching the age of 6. Children with shaken baby syndrome may require lifelong medical care.

** Information above from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)*

"The Period of PURPLE Crying" describes the time in a baby's life when they cry more than any other time, and provides a new way of understanding a baby's crying. The Period of PURPLE Crying begins at about 2 weeks of age and continues until about 3-4 months of age. Some babies cry a lot and some cry far less, but all babies go through this period. There are common characteristics of this phase, which are described by the acronym PURPLE:

- P = Peak of Crying
- U = Unexpected
- R = Resists Soothing
- P = Pain-Like Face
- L = Long Lasting
- E = Evening

To learn more about The Period of PURPLE Crying, click on the following link: <http://www.purplecrying.info>

Some additional sources for information regarding shaken baby syndrome are:

- National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome (NCSBS): <http://www.dontshake.org>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/sbs.html>

Anyone may report suspected child maltreatment. Infants or children who are being hurt by their parents or caretakers rely on the intervention of others to protect them.

Itasca County Health and Human Services and local law enforcement are the agencies charged with receiving reports of child abuse occurring in Itasca County:

Office Hours are...

Monday thru Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 pm

How to contact us...

Toll Free	(800) 422-0312
Telephone	(218) 327-2941
Fax	(218) 327-5535
TDD	(218) 327-5549

Family & Children Division Manager:

Becky Lauer - becky.lauer@co.itasca.mn.us

Family & Children Supervisor:

Lori Petermeier - lori.petermeier@co.itasca.mn.us

If you believe a child is in imminent danger, has injuries that need medical attention, or is not safe remaining at home, call 911.