Shaken Baby Syndrome: A Preventable Tragedy
## What Happens During a Shaking?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shaking stage</th>
<th>Demonstration of injury</th>
<th>Associated injury</th>
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</table>
| Shaking begins      | ![Image](image1.png)    | • Occipital lobe of brain injured  
                      | ![Image](image2.png)    | • Visual disorders/blindness                                                      |
| Shaking continues   | ![Image](image3.png)    | • Frontal lobe of brain injured  
                      | ![Image](image4.png)    | • Cognitive and emotional disabilities that result in learning and behavioral disorders |
| Shaking continues   | ![Image](image5.png)    | • Middle of the brain injured  
                      | ![Image](image6.png)    | • Paralysis, speech, hearing, and mental processing destroyed  
                      | ![Image](image7.png)    | • Possible death                                                              |
Definitions

• Clinical Definition—Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) is a form of Abusive Head Trauma (AHT)\(^1\) that causes bleeding over the surface of the brain, swelling of the brain, bleeding at the back of the eyes, and other injuries not seen together in any other disease or medical condition.\(^2\)

• Layperson’s Definition—Child abuse involving the shaking of an infant.
Legal Charges
According to U.S.A. laws

- **Assault on a Child** — What a person is charged with for having shaken an infant or child who has been diagnosed with SBS.

- **Child Homicide** — What a person can be charged with when an infant or child dies from SBS.

- In all cases of SBS, **Child Protective Services** is called, and all other children in the same environment may be removed for their protection.
What SBS Is and Is Not

- SBS is...
  - a form of child abuse
  - often ruled homicide or murder if the child dies
  - a unique, identifiable combination of injuries
  - from forceful, violent shaking
  - preventable through education
What SBS Is and Is Not (cont.)

- SBS is NOT...
  - a form of punishment or neglect
  - found among the effects of any other form of child abuse or accidental trauma
  - a pre-existing medical condition or disease
  - always seen with visible bruises
  - caused by car accidents, falls, tossing in the air, or rough play
  - caused by birth, CPR, or genetic disorders
If Frustration Builds, Ask Yourself:

- Have I tried the things that soothe most infants?
- Is the infant safe?
- How am I feeling as a caregiver?
- Where can I best put my energy right now without hurting this child?
Ways To Cope

• A caregiver’s role is not to “force” an infant to stop crying, but to cope with the crying until the infant is able to stop:\(^1\)
  - Take deep breaths and count to ten
  - Say the alphabet
  - Read an inspirational poem (post one nearby)
  - Take a warm bath or shower
  - Keep a picture of your child where crying happens most often, to remind yourself of how precious your child is to you
More Ways To Cope

• Play music that soothes or distracts you
• Exercise (sit ups, push ups, jumping jacks—your infant might like to watch!)
• Call a friend, neighbor, or relative to talk, or to relieve you for a few minutes
• Remind yourself THE CRYING WILL END
Remember...

- “...it is the baby’s job to cry. It is your job to cope with this crying.”
- You can always put the infant in a safe place and leave the room.
Always Remember...

- No infant has died from crying too much
- If someone calls you frustrated with a crying infant, offer your help
- NEVER, EVER shake an infant
  - If you need help, call your local help hotline or emergency medical number
SBS Prevention Organizations

Epilepsy Association of Central Florida:  www.aboutshakenbaby.com

U.S. National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome:  www.dontshake.org

U.S. National Shaken Baby Coalition:  www.shakenbabycoalition.org

Pennsylvania SBS Prevention & Awareness Program:  www.hmc.psu.edu/shakenbaby

SBS Prevention Plus:  www.sbsplus.com

Shaken Baby Task Force:  www.safebaby.org

The Central Massachusetts SBS Prevention Campaign:  www.sbscentralmass.com

The Shaken Baby Alliance:  www.shakenbaby.com

The Skipper Initiative:  www.skippervigil.com

Note: These are U.S. organizations. Find out the name and contact information for your local Shaken Baby Syndrome organizations.
Resources

1 The Shaken Baby Alliance. (n.d.). *What is Shaken Baby Syndrome?* [Brochure]. Fort Worth, TX, USA: The Shaken Baby Alliance.