



How to **soothe** a baby... and **calm** yourself

Shaking a baby in a moment of frustration can cause serious harm or death. When shaking an infant, the head jerks back and forth rapidly causing the brain to slam repeatedly against the skull. It is normal to feel frustrated or stressed by crying. Common triggers for shaking a child include toilet training, perceived misbehavior and crying.

Parental frustration and fatigue may make you feel like you're about to lose your cool. Don't do it.

What happens when a baby is shaken?



Because of infants' weak neck and muscles, violent or sustained shaking can lead to:

- ◆ Cessation of breathing and heartbeat
- ◆ Extreme irritability
- ◆ Seizures
- ◆ Limp arms and legs
- ◆ Decreased level of consciousness and vomiting
- ◆ And more

Children of any age can die from being shaken. If you know or suspect your baby has been injured from being shaken, take baby immediately to the hospital.

When your baby won't stop crying, please try to:

- Make sure your baby is not wet**, hungry or running a fever
- While sitting, **hold your baby across your thighs** and pat his/her back gently
- Take the baby for a walk** in a stroller
- Take a break and step away.** Make sure the baby is safe in crib or playpen and step away for a few minutes. Chill out, breathe, and call a friend.
- Turn down lights** and play soft music
- Put baby down on a flat floor** to see if they are tired of being held
- Check to **see if baby's' clothing is pinching** or tight
- Put baby in a baby swing**
- REMEMBER: **It's more important to stay calm than to stop the crying!**



TIP: Fill out the "My Baby's Crying Plan" card on the next page to use next time you need to soothe baby.



Find more resources for parents online at www.scanva.org/prc

My Baby's Crying Plan

Have a plan in place for when you get frustrated. Write down a few people you can call for help when your baby is crying. Sometimes a fresh perspective is all you need!

 CUT OUT THE CARD BELOW AND PLACE IT SOMEWHERE YOU WILL EASILY SEE IT WHEN BABY CRIES.

To soothe my baby I can try to:

- Check if baby has a wet diaper, is hungry, or running a fever
- Turn down lights and play soft music
- Give baby a soothing bath
- Put baby in a baby swing
- Give baby a new perspective or position in your arms

If I need to calm down, I can put baby somewhere safe and step away.

It's more important to stay calm than to stop the crying!

And remember to NEVER shake an infant.

People I trust and can call for help when my baby cries:

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name: 24-hour support from someone who understands

Phone Number: **1-800-CHILDREN**