## What are possible injuries from SBS/AHT?

- Permanent brain damage
- Blindness
- Seizures
- Cerebral Palsy
- Paralysis
- Developmental disability
- Death (1 in 4 die)

## What are signs or symptoms of SBS/AHT?

- Extreme irritability/crankiness
- Arms and legs become very stiff or limp like a rag doll
- Lethargic-difficulty staying awake
- Seizures/abnormal movements or staring
- Not eating or poor appetite/vomiting
- Dilated pupils/blood spots in eyes
- Difficulty breathing

If you think your child has been shaken, **call 911** or take your child to the nearest emergency room immediately. Getting medical attention right away could save your child's life.

## Where can I get more information?

Prevent Child Abuse Virginia
1-800-CHILDREN

Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline
1-800-552-7096

Shaken Baby Syndrome of Virginia, Inc.
1-757-722-6011

National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome
www.dontshake.org

Period of Purple Crying
http://purplecrying.info/#

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

801 E. Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
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SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME

# Never, Ever Shake A BABY.

## What is Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS)?

SBS, also known as **Abusive Head Trauma (AHT)**, occurs when a caregiver becomes frustrated with a crying baby or child and shakes them to stop the crying. Babies and young children can be seriously injured when they are shaken. Compared to the rest of their body, babies have large heads and weak neck muscles. When a baby is shaken, the head moves back and forth, whiplashing the brain against the skull, causing bruising, bleeding and swelling inside the brain.

## Why does SBS/AHT happen?

Most people who shake a baby in their care are not trying to hurt the child. They may become frustrated by nonstop crying, difficulty feeding, or problems with toilet training. Outside stresses like money, work, or personal relationships can add to this frustration. Caregivers may get so upset that they lose control and shake the baby.

It is important to understand that crying is normal! Crying is how babies communicate. They may be too hot or cold, want attention, be tired or hungry, or need a diaper change. If your baby is crying, check all of these things first.

Caring for a baby can be stressful! It is normal to feel frustrated and overwhelmed sometimes. If you get upset, there are things you can do for yourself and the baby that can help you cope.

Never, ever shake a child.

## How can I prevent these injuries?

- Never, ever shake your child.
- Make sure that everyone who cares for your child knows not to shake them.
- Make sure to share this important information on SBS/AHT with anybody who cares for your child.
- Remember: Don't leave your baby with a boyfriend or girlfriend if caretaking will be too much for them. Just because you can care for your baby doesn't mean someone you're dating can do the same.
- Learn what to do when your baby cries.

## What can I do to make my baby stop crying?

All babies cry a lot during the first few months of life. Crying does not mean that your baby is being bad or that your baby is angry with you. Sometimes, babies just need to cry. Never, ever shake a child.

## How can you calm a crying baby?

- Check to see if your baby is hungry, is too hot or too cold, or needs a diaper change.
- Check to see if your baby is sick or has a fever.
- Feed your baby slowly and burp often.
- Rock your baby.
- Give your baby a pacifier or let your baby breastfeed.
- Play soft music, sing or hum to your baby.
- Take your baby for a ride in a car or stroller

## What if nothing seems to work?

- Stop- place your baby on their back in their crib, close the door and go into another room.
- Do something to relax: take a bath or shower, watch TV, listen to music.
- Sit down, close your eyes, and take deep breaths.
- Call a friend or family member to talk.
- Have someone come over to give you a break.
- No baby has ever died from crying – it is better to let babies cry than to risk hurting them!