

# How to prevent shaken baby syndrome

## What is shaken baby syndrome?

Shaken baby syndrome, or SBS, is the name given to the serious injuries that can occur when a baby is shaken.

It is the single most preventable cause of serious head injury in babies under one year of age in New Zealand.

## It is 100% PREVENTABLE

The number one reason given for shaking a baby is "I just wanted the baby to stop crying".

Shaking often occurs when parents, grandparents, babysitters or other caregivers become frustrated and lose control when they are not able to calm a crying baby.

## Shaking a baby can cause:

- Permanent brain damage
- Paralysis – loss of limb movement
- Blindness
- Deafness
- Seizures (fits)
- Broken bones
- Delays of normal development
- DEATH

## How to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome

**NEVER, EVER** shake a baby

Babies cry often and a lot

- Have a plan of what YOU will do if your baby keeps crying and you become upset or angry. There are things you can do and people who will help you

## If you think you might lose control:

**DO NOT** pick up baby

## Walk Away

- If you are holding baby, put him/her down gently in a safe place – preferably in their cot
- Walk away-This is a good thing to do to make sure baby is safe

## Take a Break

- Check baby often, BUT do not PICK BABY UP UNTIL YOU ARE CALM
- Try doing something that usually relaxes you. Take a bath or a shower, have a cup of tea or coffee

## Talk to Someone

- Call a friend, family member or trusted neighbour
- Call your Midwife, GP, Well Child Provider or one of the crisis numbers listed on the back of this brochure
- Remember crying is one of the few ways a baby has to communicate with you and the world around them

Read the information "Coping with a crying baby".  
**It is never okay to shake a baby.**

**Make sure that all the people who care for your baby know this.**

**Never leave your baby alone with someone who you think might lose control**

**If your baby has been shaken do not let fear or pride stop you from seeking medical help immediately.**

## Getting help

- Friends and family members
- Your Midwife / Well Child Tamariki Ora
- Your GP / Doctor

[continued]

For help, please contact any of the below;

**Healthline**  
Phone: 0800 611116

**Lifeline**  
Phone: 0800 543 354

**Plunketline**  
Phone: 0800 933 922

**Youthline for young parents**  
Phone: 0800 376 633  
Free TXT 243

Power to Protect  
Phone: 0800 200 026

You can get more information from:  
[www.kidshealth.org.nz](http://www.kidshealth.org.nz) (preventing Shaken baby Syndrome)

**Other possible contacts:**

**Barnardos**  
Phone: 0800 4 Parent (0800 472 7368)

**Child Youth and Family**  
Phone: 0508 FAMILY (0508 326 549)

**Shine**  
(Previously Preventing Violence in the Home)  
Phone: 0508 DV HELP (0508 744 633)

Why not take the time now to list the names and numbers of close friends and relative you can call.

Name	Number
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
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Never, Ever, Shake a baby  
One shake is all it takes for the consequences to last a lifetime.

If you think your baby has been shaken, get help straight away. Don't let fear or pride stop you. It could save your baby's life.  
Phone 111 for urgent medical help

