

WHY SHAKING IS SO DANGEROUS

When parents lose control – even only for a few seconds – and end up shaking their baby, they can inflict life-long damage. Infants are not yet able to hold their heads up on their own. When shaken, the head is thrust back and forth. It can lead to major brain injuries. This is called shaken baby syndrome. Blood vessels and nerve fibers may tear. Seizures, as well as mental and physical disabilities can be the result: 10 to 30 percent of affected children die from this.

Also, tell grandparents, neighbours and babysitters about the dangers of shaking a baby. Should you lose control – take your child to the next hospital immediately!

HOW TO HOLD YOUR BABY CORRECTLY

Babies have a head that is heavy compared to their bodies and they cannot yet hold it up by themselves. Neck muscles are not yet developed sufficiently for this task. This is why it is important to always support your baby's head.



Picking up your baby



Holding your baby

Sources: www.kindergesundheit-info.de

GET HELP HERE

- Paediatricians (Kinderärztinnen, Kinderärzte)
- (Family) midwives (Familienhebammen)
- Counselling services for parents of babies with so-called regulatory disorders, such as family and parenting counselling centres (Familien- und Erziehungsberatung), pregnancy counselling centres (Schwangerschaftsberatung), crying outpatient clinics (Schreiambulanz), paediatric hospitals (Kinderkliniken), social paediatric centres (SPZ)
- Parent helpline 0800 - 111 0 550
Nummer gegen Kummer e. V.
- Online counselling for parents
www.bke-elternberatung.de

See also: www.elternsein.info

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ON A SHORT FUSE?

Never
shake your
baby!

Tips for strong parents

Foto: Jun Kim

NOT WHAT I EXPECTED ...

You were eagerly looking forward to your baby being born, but a few things might have turned out differently than you expected. Your baby is healthy and there's nothing wrong with it but it cries and cries.

Stay calm. It's not your baby's fault that it is crying so much.

WHY BABIES CRY

All babies cry during the first few months of life – some more than others. Extended and frequent crying can be normal. In the second and third month of life, healthy infants may be crying for two to three hours per day, especially in the evenings. They are not yet able to express their needs any other way. Crying is an infant's only way of showing that there is something wrong.



Babies cry because they

- are tired or hungry
- are too hot or too cold
- need a fresh nappy
- need peace and quiet
- want to be close to their mother or father
- want to cuddle
- and many other reasons ...

WHAT HELPS...

You have fed your child and changed its nappy, but it is still crying. Why?

Calmly try the following things:

- Gently rock your baby in your arms.
- Sing a song.
- Gently massage its tummy and back.
- Go for a walk with your baby.

Some babies also cry for no apparent reason. But, your baby never cries to annoy you!

- Even if you find it difficult: the calmer you can stay, the easier it is for your child to relax. Take turns looking after the baby so that you get rest periods for yourself.



Foto: Ludolf Dahmen

YOUR BABY IS STILL CRYING?

The relentless crying of a baby can be very stressful for parents, especially if all attempts to settle the baby fail. It may be that you get desperate, and angry.

Is your baby's crying stressing you out? Remember:

It's not your baby's fault that it is crying. It is not crying to annoy you.

**Never
shake your
baby!**

BEING STRONG – STAYING IN CONTROL

Are you noticing that you are losing control? Proceed as follows:

1. Lay your baby down in a safe place, e.g. in a cot or on the floor.
2. Leave the room.
3. Take a deep breath.
4. Check on your child every few minutes.
5. Seek support if needed.

Good to know: the crying phase will pass. It usually does from around month four.