

SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME (SBS)

Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) is the term used to describe the signs and symptoms resulting from a child being shaken. Shaking a baby is dangerous because a baby's head is large and heavy in proportion to the baby's body; there is space between the brain and skull to allow for growth and development; and the baby's neck muscles are not yet developed. Violently shaking a baby or young child forces the head to whip back and forth, causing blood vessels in the brain and eyes to rip and bleed. In addition, this motion causes the brain to move and bounce against the skull which can cause brain damage.

Shaking can cause:

- Blindness
- Paralysis
- Broken bones
- Cerebral Palsy
- Mental retardation
- Speech or learning difficulties
- Hearing loss
- Seizures
- Death

PA Legislation: Act No. 2002 –176, SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME EDUCATION & PREVENTION PROGRAM

- Signed in December 2002
- Requires hospitals to:
 - provide parents educational materials on SBS free of charge.
 - present parents with a voluntarily “commitment” statement indicating that they have received the educational materials.
- Charged the Department of Health to develop a program to focus on awareness, education and prevention of shaken baby syndrome and prescribe a format for a “commitment” statement.

SBS Facts*

- In the United States, the yearly rate of SBS is between 750 and 3,750 infants.
- One-third of the victims of SBS survive with few or no consequences, one-third of the victims suffer permanent injury and one-third of the victims die.
- Most victims are under one year of age.
- Most SBS victims are male.
- SBS most often occurs when an adult is frustrated and angry because the baby won't stop crying.
- Toilet training difficulties and feeding problems can also lead to SBS.

*This information compiled from: PA Act 176 of 2002, The Pennsylvania Shaken Baby Syndrome Education Program, the Brain Injury Association of America, the New York Department of Health, and The Arc.

The SBS Education Program Office is in the Division of Child and Adult Health Services
in the Bureau of Family Health (717-772-2762).

Sometimes people shake babies when they won't stop crying.

Please... Never Shake A Baby!