



Shaking a newborn baby is dangerous

A newborn baby is not strong enough to hold up their head. If you shake them, their head will wobble in all directions. If their head hits a hard object, there may not be a visible injury, as in older infants or adults, but they could have internal bleeding around the brain. Brusque movements when handling them without supporting their head or throwing a baby in the air can be dangerous, too.

The majority of injuries in children heal quickly and without aftereffects. But this is not true of injuries to the skull or brain, which can lead to serious illness or even death.

Make sure that everyone who cares for a newborn baby is aware of the risks of this manoeuvre.

Ask for help

Health and social services professionals can help you.

If you have any questions, talk to:

- Paediatric or family medicine professionals.
- Professional midwives.
- Social services professionals.

This brochure is a version of the first edition in Catalan developed by the Catalan Association of Mistreated Children, in particular its branch in Terres de Ponent.

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Help!

THEY WON'T STOP CRYING

Advice
for caregivers of infants





Image: Pixabay

The newborn baby won't stop crying. You've rocked them, fed them, changed their nappy... and yet nothing soothes them. You become so irritated that you can hardly stand it.

It may occur to you to shake them vigorously to try to get them to quiet down.

Don't do this! You could seriously injure their brain, sometimes mortally.

If a newborn cries...

They probably have a good reason, but it's often difficult to figure out.

A healthy baby screams or cries:

- if they're hungry
- if they're tired
- if their nappy is wet or dirty
- if they don't feel right for another reason, or if they want to listen to their voice or be rocked in your arms.

Newborn babies cry an average of 2-3 hours per day, but sometimes they can cry for many hours

And if despite everything the baby keeps crying...

You've tried everything, to no avail. You're about to lose control...

Place the baby in their bed, on their side or face up, turn off the light and leave for a while until you collect yourself. Meantime, it may be beneficial to call someone you trust.

If the baby continues to cry, it is unlikely to hurt them. It's much better than your losing control or shaking or hitting them.

When the crying is different

Even though it's normal for a newborn baby to cry, try to notice if the way they cry changes.

Call your paediatrician or family medicine office if the baby:

- cries longer than usual
- cries more strongly than usual
- seems to be suffering, or their crying is worrying you.

What can you do?

- Try to get them to nurse (or take the bottle).
- Pick them up tenderly.
- Rock them as you walk.
- Speak to them sweetly or sing a lullaby.
- Stroke their belly or back softly.
- Hand them off to someone else to help calm them.

Image: Pixabay

