

Shaken Baby Syndrome Video: New Parents

Dr. Kacica: Three seconds is all it takes to change a life forever. Most of the time Shaken Baby Syndrome occurs when adults frustrated and angry with children shake them violently. Shaken Baby Syndrome is child abuse. One in four shaken babies die. Others are left permanently disabled mentally and physically.

Patrick: There is nobody on the planet that has ever walked the planet that will be like her or had been like her. She is a unique human being. As unique as you can be.

Darryl: Cynthia loved to smile. She loved to be held by everyone. In fact she was even brought to her sister's school for show and tell. She was a big hit in both classes.

Dr. Dias: Shaken Baby Syndrome is a form of child abuse and it results when a baby is thrown, slammed or violently shaken and the results include damage to the brain, bleeding around the surface of the brain, bleeding in the backs of the eyes the retinas of the eyes and in some cases rib or lung bone fractures.

Darryl: Cynthia was dropped off at 7:45am for care at a certified childcare provider. Actually, my wife's best friend. She had five children of her own. At that time she was happy, healthy and safe. Sometime in the early afternoon they believe about 1:30 she was shaken. The childcare provider then would call my wife and tell her to come straight home after work to pick up Cynthia. Arriving shortly after 6 pm she knew that there was something wrong with our child and rushed her to the hospital. There were no signs of life. They would try everything medically possible to revive her but no more could be done and she was pronounced dead at 6:59 PM on November 17th of 2000.

Patrick: She was born happy and healthy on June 5, 2005. She was shaken by her baby nurse when she was just five days old. Broke four ribs, both collar bones and caused a severe brain injury. She lost about 60 percent of her rear cortex and has been challenged ever since.

Dr. Kacica: As seen in Darrell and Patrick's situations their daughters suffered because someone lost control. It's a story that happens too often. A babysitter, a childcare provider a parent becomes upset and

usually without even thinking about what they are doing can cause devastating injuries, even death.

Narrator: Shaken Baby Syndrome is most often an act of unthinking, lashing out at a baby. Especially when the baby has been crying a lot. Babies have heavy heads and weak neck muscles. So, when a baby is shaken the delicate brain moves back and forth inside the skull causing serious brain injury. A baby's brain and the blood vessels connecting the skull to the brain are fragile and immature. When a baby is shaken the brain bounces about the skull causing the blood vessels to tear away and blood to pool inside the skull causing permanent damage to the baby's brain.

Shaking can cause:

- Brain Injury
- Cerebral Palsy
- Blindness
- Learning and Behavior Problems
- Seizures
- Paralysis
- Death

Dr. Dias: It's vitally important for parents to talk with anyone who is going to be caring for their child about the effects of violent infant shaking and about Shaken Baby Syndrome.

Narrator: Besides crying an adult may lash out at a baby because of problems they are having in their own lives such as financial worries or a recent separation. Even a problem as seemingly simple as not getting enough sleep may push a person's stress level high enough to lose control.

Darryl: There was no profile for someone that would shake a baby. We know that any adult could shake a baby in a moment of frustration and anger and change lives forever.

Narrator: Recognizing and reporting abuse can help to prevent it from escalating to the point where the child is seriously injured or dies.

Look for signs such as:

- Tired
- Limp
- Lazy
- Extreme irritability

- Decreased appetite
- No smiling or making noises
- Difficulty swallowing, sucking or breathing
- Unable to lift head
- Unable to focus or track with their eyes
- Different size pupils
- Vomiting
- Difficulty staying awake

Dr. Dias: If you think your baby's been shaken it's very important to seek medical attention immediately. You need to call 911 and bring the baby to the Emergency Room immediately to get medical help.

Narrator: Learn to recognize your stress before it becomes critical and give yourself a time-out. If possible, call a family member or trusted friend to help you for a while so you can take a break. If no one else can help place the baby on their back in a safe place like a crib or play pen without blankets or pillows. Take this time to relax. Breathe slowly and deeply. Listen to music, read or exercise. The most important thing is to stop before you lose control.

It's just as important that caretakers and others who are around your baby understand the dangers of shaken baby syndrome. Talk to them about how to recognize the symptoms of stress and how to handle stress. Let them know that if they feel their stress level is becoming difficult for them to handle they should call you immediately.

Dr. Dias: All babies during the first few months of life cry a lot. And, most babies have a fussy period. This usually occurs in the late afternoon or the early evening. Some babies will cry more than others. But, all babies have a period of inconsolable crying that may be difficult or even impossible to control completely. It's important to understand that crying doesn't mean that your baby is being bad or that you have done something wrong.

To calm a 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. Skin to skin contact will soothe and relax both baby and the adult. Run a vacuum cleaner or make other "white noise". While sitting, lay your baby face down across your knees and gently pat or rub their back. Play soft music, sing or hum to your baby. Take your baby for a ride in a stroller. And, if everything else fails let your baby cry it out.

Dr. Kacica: It is always better to take a break from a stressful situation than let it escalate to hurting a baby. Never, ever shake a baby.

For more information on caring for babies and young children visit www.health.ny.gov or call 1-800-522-5006