

# Fact Sheet—Shaken Baby

Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) can seriously injure the brain and can have a damaging impact on an infant's body. Some of the immediate effects are mild, some are severe, but all can have a lifelong effect.

## **Facts to Remember:**

- The growing bodies of infants are particularly susceptible to injury.
- The size and weaknesses of an infant's body make the infant at risk for injury.
- Just shaking an infant one time can have lifelong effects on the infant's body and ability to learn.

Although an infant may look normal after being shaken, some injuries may show up later. **NEVER SHAKE AN INFANT OR CHILD!**

## **Types of Injuries**

- Bleeding in the brain
- Bleeding in the eye
- Damage to the spinal cord and neck
- Fractures to the long bones (i.e., arms and legs), ribs and skull
- Swelling of the brain

## **Signals**

- Vomiting
- Seizures and convulsions (sudden, violent and involuntary contraction of the muscles)
- Decreased appetite
- Breathing problems
- Bruising
- Inability to lift head
- Irritability: May be easily upset, lose temper, become angry for little or no reason or cry easily
- Lethargy: May seem unusually tired or disinterested during activity of any kind

## **Results**

- Brain damage
- Blindness
- Hearing loss
- Paralysis
- Cerebral palsy (neurological [nervous system] disorder that affects body movement and muscle coordination)
- Coma
- Death: Occurs in 20 percent of cases

## **Delayed Results:**

- As a child's body grows, so do the cells in the brain. Shaken baby syndrome (SBS) can delay or interrupt that growth.
- Poor balance and coordination
- Poor vision
- Delayed development, including language
- Mental retardation
- Memory and attention deficits
- Depression