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Never, ever shake or hurt a baby

The sound of a crying baby that can't be soothed has got to all of us at some time or other. Not only does the sound start to stress us out but the fact we can't control it and calm the baby all the time also adds to the stress. When that is added to other stress, parents/carers looking after babies can sometimes get so angry and frustrated they lose control and they shake the baby with devastating consequences.

The reason shaking a baby is so dangerous is because their neck muscles are weak and unable to support their head. The brain bounces backwards and forwards inside the skull, tearing blood vessels and causing brain damage. The act of shaking a baby can cause permanent injuries and possibly, death.

It is important to know as a parent/carer with a new baby when you are beginning to feel frustrated, that growing feeling of not being able to cope with the noise of the baby crying. You might feel frustration and tension turning into anger and building to a point where you feel you may snap! Handling a baby when you are feeling like this will make things worse. You may find yourself shouting at the baby and handling them roughly.



Comfort methods can sometimes soothe the baby and the crying will stop.

It's OK to walk away just for a few minutes if the baby is safe, while you calm yourself down.



Before you reach this stage you should stop, check the baby is safe and walk away. It's OK to walk away just for a few minutes if the baby is safe, while you calm yourself down. It might be helpful to think of things that help calm you down before you reach this stage and include them on the [ICON Crying Plan](#).

It can be stressful coping with a baby crying. It might help to remember the ICON message: Infant crying is normal, it starts to increase at 2 weeks and peaks at about 6, 8 weeks before gradually getting less. Comforting methods can help, It's OK to walk away, Never, ever shake a baby. Talk to your partner, friends, relatives about how you are feeling. Agreeing what you are going to do if you feel you are really struggling to cope and agreeing that you should not handle the baby if you don't feel calm will help when those stressful times become a reality. Remember you are not doing anything wrong if you cannot stop the baby crying - this phase will pass.

Remember your Personal Crying Plan that you created reminding you ways to cope, deep breathing, relaxation and talking to someone. Always make sure you feel calm before handling the baby and if you aren't calm do not handle the baby.

When you are leaving your baby in the care of anyone else, they also need to understand about how to cope with a crying baby. They must not handle the baby if they are struggling to cope. Men especially can struggle with the noise of a baby crying so bear this in mind when the baby is going through this stage.

Remember the ICON message: Infant crying is normal.



If you are worried your baby is ill contact your GP, Health Visitor, Midwife, or call 111 or 999 if you think your baby needs emergency medical help.

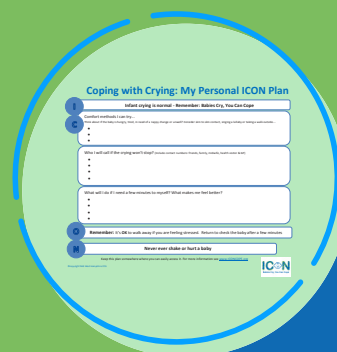


Personal Crying Plan

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Remember!

It's ok to ask for help you are not a bad parent - we have all felt this way at some time. Never ever shake or hurt a baby.