



Abusive Head Trauma/Shaken Baby
Syndrome is 100% Preventable

Situations That Trigger Abusive Events

- The most commonly described and well-documented trigger is infant crying.
- Confluence of peak of crying and peak incidence of abusive head trauma makes crying a likely cause.
- Environmental or provider stressors, violence, psychopathology, or deficient parenting skills can be additional factors.
- Behaviors that trigger child abuse in toddlers include temperament, behavior, and toileting.



Babies less than 1 year of age (with the highest risk period at 2 to 4 months) are at greatest risk for SBS because they cry longer and more frequently, and are easier to shake than older and larger children.

Infant Crying and Abuse Parental Self Report Study

- Of the parents of 6-month-old infants, 5.60% report to have shaken their infant to stop their crying or to have undertaken similar detrimental actions like smothering or slapping
- 3.35% of the parents of 6-month-old infants report to have shaken their baby at least once to stop their crying.
- For parents of 1-month-old infants, this percentage is 1.10%.
- **Parental self report likely under-represents the true incidence.**

Prevalence

- **Abusive head trauma (AHT) is the most lethal form of child abuse. Twenty percent of babies die and 80% of survivors are left with some degree of permanent brain damage. Approximately 1400 cases of AHT are seen in US hospitals each year and the actual number of shaken babies may be 100-150 times higher (Theodore A, et al, Epidemiological features of the physical and sexual maltreatment of children in Carolinas, Peds 2005;115: 331-7).**
- **SBS is most prevalent in the youngest of babies. The mean age of attacked babies is 3.5 months and the most common trigger of SBS is infant crying. According to another report, the incidence of this type of abuse almost doubled from 2004-7 to 2007-9 (2010 PAS conference).**