It was very hard to read the article in this weekend’s *New York Times* on shaken baby syndrome, since it featured the stories of several babies who died as a result of brain injuries believed to be caused by people who shook them violently. Also disturbing were the many doubts cast on the diagnosis of shaken baby syndrome; it’s simply not easy to pinpoint with 100 percent certainty whether a child actually did die that way. All of the convicted abusers in the story denied having hurt the children, yet the baby deaths that occurred following each conviction were considered to be a direct result of being shaken. It’s possible that a child may have had an infection or bleeding disorder, for instance. One woman was sent to prison after being convicted for killing one of the babies she cared for in her home. Eleven years later, wrongful death had been raised about the cause of the baby’s death that the charges against her were dropped and she was freed. Of course, none of this really matters to the bereaved families of these poor children. And shaken baby syndrome is a very real problem, as we’ve covered in *Parents*. Between 1,200 and 1,600 infants in the U.S. end up in emergency rooms because of it. Colicky babies are often most vulnerable, because their inconsolable crying can serve as a trigger for their parents or caregivers. We reported on this in a story in our June 2010 issue, and offered this advice for anyone who worries that she or he can’t take the crying anymore. If you need immediate assistance, call the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline at 800-4-A-Child or 800-422-4433.

To talk to an expert about the baby’s crying, call the Erikson Institute’s Fussy Baby Network’s “tummy” line at 888-431-2225. Staffers offer free guidance and reference information from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST, if you leave a message you’ll get a callback within 24 hours.

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February 7, 2011 at 11:39 am, by Kara Cornilad

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