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The Sadness of Shaken-Baby Syndrome

February 7, 2011 at 11:39 am, by [Kara Corridan](#)

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It was very hard to read [the article in this weekend's New York Times Magazine](#) 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 died that way. All of the convicted abusers in the story denied having hurt the children, and in many cases even doctors couldn't say for sure whether the injuries they sustained were a direct result of having been harmed (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 her in her home. Eleven years later, enough doubt had been raised about the cause of that 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:
 To get immediate assistance, call the [Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline](#) at 800-422-4453.
 To talk to an expert about the baby's crying, call the [Erikson Institute's Fussy Baby Network's](#) "warm" line at 888-431-2229. Staffers offer free guidance and referrals weekdays 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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