

## WHAT IS ICON?

The ICON Programme is a preventative programme, based around helping parents cope with a crying baby. The word 'ICON' represents the following message:

- I – Infant crying is normal
- C – Comforting methods can sometimes soothe the baby
- O – It's OK to walk away
- N – Never, ever shake a baby

## ❖ WHAT IS (AHT) ABUSIVE HEAD TRAUMA?

previously 'Shaken Baby Syndrome', usually sustained via shaking and/or impact of an infant head, consists of :

- sub-dural haemorrhages,
- parenchymal brain injuries
- retinal haemorrhages,
- Can have associated upper spinal, long bone and organ injuries.

## ❖ RISK OF ABUSIVE HEAD TRAUMA

Certain conditions can increase risk of babies crying and therefore a risk of AHT; conditions include :

- GORD
- Colic
- Dystonia
- Ex-prem
- NAS
- Feeding difficulties
- High frequency crying

## ❖ HOW AHT PRESENTS

- Collapse
- Septic/Meningitis picture
- NAS (Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome)
- Breathing difficulties/Apnoea
- Injuries/bruises: especially head and neck

## WHERE CAN PARENT/CARERS GO FOR HELP AND SUPPORT IF THEY ARE STRUGGLING TO COPE WITH THEIR BABY'S CRYING

Babies can cry for reasons such as if they are hungry, tired, wet/dirty or if they are unwell. If you think there is something wrong with your baby or the crying won't stop speak to your GP, Midwife or Health Visitor.

- If you are worried that your baby is unwell call NHS 111.
- NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000 - Monday to Friday 8am – 10pm or 9am – 6pm at the weekends. (It's free and you don't have to say who you are)
- Visit ICON website's [page for parents](#)



## WHAT ARE THE KEY MESSAGES OF ICON?

- Crying is a normal part of child development
- All babies will cry a lot from the ages of 2 weeks to 3-4 months, but this can vary from baby to baby.
- Crying seems to peak in the late afternoon and early evening... but this can vary between babies.
- Crying is normal... all parents can feel stressed, but babies are not doing this on purpose.
- Shaking a baby can cause significant injury and even death. Better to put you baby down safely and walk away for a few minutes if you are struggling.

## KEY INFORMATION

[Comfort methods](#) can sometimes soothe the baby and the crying will stop. Is the baby hungry, tired or in need of a nappy change?



The important message to share with parent/carers is to **Never, ever shake or hurt a baby. It can cause lasting brain damage and death.**

## A&E STAFF CAN EXPLAIN AND SHARE THE CRYING CURVE OF EARLY INFANT CRYING WITH PARENTS/CARERS.

A baby may start to cry more frequently at about 2 weeks of age. The crying may get more frequent and last longer during the next few weeks, hitting a peak at about 6 to 8 weeks.



Barr, R (1990) The normal crying curve: What do we really know? *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*.

## WHAT A&E AND URGENT TREATMENT CENTRES CAN DO:

- Consider Abusive Head Trauma in the above presentations
- Check parents/carers know about ICON
- Normalise parent/carer feelings towards their crying baby
- Ensure fathers/male carers are aware of ICON messaging;
- inform child's GP & HV
- Give Medical treatment of any injuries or illnesses in parallel to considering safeguarding and delivering ICON .