

# The Period of PURPLE Crying®

## A New Way to Understand Your Baby's Crying

The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome's new prevention program called *The Period of PURPLE Crying*® approaches shaken baby syndrome prevention by helping parents and care givers generally understand the features of crying in normal infants that are frustrating and can lead to shaking or abuse. The program is designed to create a cultural change in the way parents and others think of infant crying, especially inconsolable crying. If parents can understand and handle this normal early crying period, they are less likely to feel stressed to the point where they shake their baby out of frustration.

Many programs tell parents that crying is normal, but this program is very different. The program provides the opportunity for parents to learn about the crying characteristics that they are experiencing during this unique period in the first few months of life, the result of more than 25 years of research on normal infant crying conducted by Ronald G. Barr, MDCM, along with other scientists worldwide. Their research has contributed to the understanding that these patterns of early crying, though frustrating, are a part of normal development.

Dr. Barr created the program the *Period of PURPLE Crying*® to help describe these characteristics of early infant crying in normal infants, beginning at about two weeks of age and usually ending between four and five months of age. The letters in the *PURPLE* acronym describe these normal characteristics of infant crying:

**P**eak of Crying – Crying peaks during the second month, decreasing after that

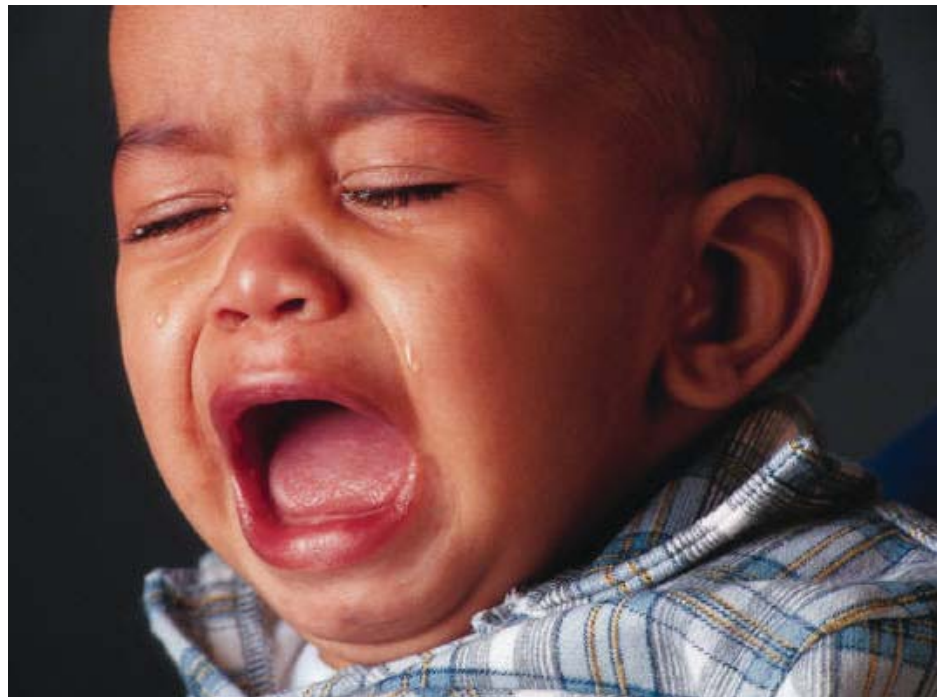
**U**nexpected – Crying comes and goes unexpectedly, for no apparent reason

**R**esists Soothing – Crying continues despite all soothing efforts by caregivers

**P**ain-like Face – Infants look like they are in pain, even when they are not

**L**ong Lasting – Crying can go on for 30-40 minutes, and much longer

**E**vening Crying – Crying occurs more in the late afternoon and evening



And the word “Period” is used to let parents know that this experience of increased frustrating crying eventually comes to an end.

In 2004, the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome, the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center of the University of Washington, and the University of British Columbia received a grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the George S. and Delores Doré Eccles Foundation, to produce new materials and an educational film, and to empirically test the new program. The program was tested through four different types of delivery systems: maternity services, pediatric offices, prenatal classes and nurse home visitor programs. More than 4,800 parents participated in the research and 75 parents participated in focus groups to develop the 10-minute DVD and 11-page booklet.

The *PURPLE Crying* Program is:

- Educational and attractive to parents of newborns on the first day of life
- Interesting and valuable for all parents while emphasizing the dangers of shaking a baby
- Clear, memorable, and meaningful with a positive message
- Presented at a grade-three-level language
- Representative of multicultural and ethnic backgrounds
- Acceptable to public health nurses: no bottles, blankets, or bumper pads
- Economical
- Designed for each family of a new baby to receive a copy to review and to share with others

## Information for Hospital Staff

# Parent Presentation and Providing the Program Materials

1. Parents of new babies who are born in hospitals should receive the program and a short presentation while they are at the hospital. It is important that both parents receive the program whenever possible.
2. The program should be presented to the parents by a person in a position of authority and influence, such as a nurse, health educator or physician.
3. The program should be presented to the parent(s) separately from other educational issues. However, this may not be possible and the program can be given at the time of discharge. Scripts for presenting the program are available from the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome at [www.dontshake.org](http://www.dontshake.org).
4. Ideally, the nurse educator should allow time to respond to parents' questions. The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome can provide the most Commonly Asked Questions asked by parents.
5. There are three ways to offer the program information to parents.
  - **At the bedside**, one on one, using the script provided by the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome. This script takes about 5 minutes to give to parents. In ideal situations, the film should be shown to the parents after the 5 minute presentation. The nurse educator can leave the room but should come back to answer any questions.
  - **Classes for parents** held in the post natal department can be offered; however, if these are optional, in some hospitals poor attendance can occur. If these classes are mandatory for parents to attend, for example, in military situations, this can be an excellent method to present to parents. Presenters can take the time to organize a longer version of the program, answer questions during the class and show the film. The National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome has visual aids for these class situations and other materials that may be needed, such as a life size doll, to use for demonstration purposes.
  - **Prenatal classes** are another way to present the information to parents. This allows for a longer presentation; however, it must be noted that often only a small percentage of parents attend prenatal classes and many are first time parents. Therefore, this method is better to use as an enhancement option rather than as a form of distribution.

## Implementation of The Period of **PURPLE** Crying®

Thanks to a generous grant from the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, the National Exchange Club Foundation has purchased from the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome, a limited supply of free *PURPLE Crying* program materials, which Exchange Clubs can supply to hospitals as an incentive to implement *PURPLE Crying* education program, perhaps as a pilot program. This supply of free materials serves only to begin the *PURPLE Crying* program, with future *PURPLE Crying* materials becoming the responsibility of the hospital, possibly with the support of your Exchange Club.



*PURPLE Crying* program materials will need to be purchased directly from the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome. Orders can be placed toll free at 888-273-0071 or by faxing a completed order form (downloadable at <https://www.dontshake.com/ProductStore/>) to 801-627-3321. *PURPLE Crying* materials are available at the following rates according to quantity ordered:

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| • 100-499: \$3.50 per package | National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome   |
| • 500-999: \$2.50 per package | 2955 Harrison Blvd. Ste.102, Ogden, UT 84403  |
| • 1,000+: \$2.00 per package  | Toll free 888-273-0071 or email: <a href="mailto:mail@dontshake.org">mail@dontshake.org</a> |

National Center on  
**Shaken Baby  
Syndrome**  
[www.dontshake.org](http://www.dontshake.org)



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The American  
Legion Child  
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[www.legion.org/cwf](http://www.legion.org/cwf)

