

What can Happen to Abused Children?

As Children

Babies who are victims of shaken baby syndrome can suffer bleeding in the eye or brain; blindness, damage to the spinal cord and neck; rib and bone fractures. These injuries can be fatal.



- When your crying baby can't be calmed, you may be tempted to try anything to get the tears to stop — but it's important to always treat your child gently. Picking up a baby and shaking, throwing, hitting, or hurting him or her is never an appropriate response. It only takes a few seconds of shaking to cause irreversible brain damage in an infant. If you're having trouble managing your emotions or the stress of parenthood, seek help. If other people help take care of your child to give you a short break, seek them out such as grandparent, aunt, sibling or a trusted friend — make sure they know the dangers of shaken baby syndrome. When you feel frustrated, angry, or stressed while caring for your baby, take a break, call a friend, relative, neighbor, or a parent helpline for support. Put your baby in a crib on his or her back, make sure the baby is safe, and then walk away for a bit, checking on him or her every 5 to 10 minutes. Remember, this will get better.
- Child physical abuse can result in the malformation of the brain, resulting in impaired mental development and lack of growth in vital areas. This can result in developmental disabilities.

- **Child abuse victims as young as three years of age have shown signs of depression and withdrawal symptoms.**
- **Child abuse victims are more likely to exhibit anti-social behaviors, including borderline personality disorders and violent behavior.**



- **Child abuse victims placed in foster or kinship care because of abuse or neglect were found to score lower than other students in tests of cognitive capacity, language development, and academic achievement.**

As Teenagers



- **In a study of young adults who suffered child abuse or neglect, 80% met criteria for at least one psychiatric disorder by age 21, including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and suicide attempts.**
- **In a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services study of homeless youth, it found that 46% of those surveyed had escaped a home where they suffered physical abuse, and 17% left because of sexual abuse.**

- **Young people who were victims of child abuse and neglect are 25% more likely to experience teen pregnancies, delinquencies, and to suffer mental health problems. They are more likely to perform lower in school, to engage in high-risk sexual behavior, and to use alcohol and illicit drugs.**



- **According to a National Institute of Justice study, abused and neglected children were 11 times more likely to engage in criminal behavior as teens, are 2.7 times more likely to be arrested for violent and criminal behavior as an adult, and are 3.1 times more likely to be arrested for one of many forms of violent crime.**

As Adults

- **Adults who suffered child abuse and neglect can develop allergies, arthritis, asthma, bronchitis, high blood pressure, and ulcers, in addition to other physical disabilities because of poor health caused by the abuse.**
- **Child abuse and neglect have been associated with panic and dissociative disorders, attention deficit and/or hyperactivity disorder, depression, anger, and post-traumatic stress disorder in children and in adults who suffered abuse.**
- **Adults who were abused or neglected as children are more likely to abuse alcohol or drugs during their lifetimes. A study found that as**

many as two-thirds of individuals in drug treatment programs reported being abused as children.

- **Researchers estimate that one-third of abused and neglected children will grow up to abuse their own children when they become parents.**

