

developmental delays; hearing loss; cerebral palsy; and mild to profound mental, cognitive, or motor impairments ([Altimier, 2008](#)). Nurses can take an active role in prevention of AHT by teaching caregivers about care for infants and techniques to cope with inconsolable crying ([Barr, 2012](#)).

Nursing Alert

Stress to parents the danger of shaking infants (shaking can cause AHT). Education must include coping mechanisms on caring for children with inconsolable crying.

Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy

Munchausen syndrome by proxy (MSBP), also known as *medical child abuse* or *factitious disorder by proxy*, is a rare but serious form of child abuse in which caregivers deliberately exaggerate or fabricate histories and symptoms or induce symptoms. It is a form of child maltreatment that may include physical, emotional, and psychological abuse for the gratification of the caregiver. In most cases, the perpetrator is the biologic mother with some degree of health care knowledge and training. Health care providers can become easily misled and unknowingly enable the perpetrator ([Squires and Squires, 2013](#)). Because of the history of symptoms provided by the caregiver, the child endures painful and unnecessary medical testing and procedures. Common symptoms presented are seizures, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, and altered mental status; they are usually witnessed only by the perpetrator.

Considerations when determining whether a child is a victim of MSBP include:

- Is the child's condition consistent with the reported history?
- Does diagnostic evidence support the reported history?
- Has anyone other than the caregiver witnessed the symptoms?
- Is treatment being provided primarily because of the caregiver's demands?

The resolution of symptoms after separation from the perpetrator confirms the diagnosis.

Factors Predisposing to Physical Abuse