

Coping with Your Baby's Crying

All babies cry, but some babies cry more than others. Sometimes you can tell that your baby is crying because your baby is hungry or uncomfortable. At other times, you may not know why your baby is crying. Your baby is just trying to communicate. Crying peaks at 2 months and a baby can cry up to 2 hours a day.

When your baby starts crying, try to stop the crying. By responding to the crying quickly, you may prevent your baby from becoming too upset. Common causes of crying are wet or soiled diaper, hunger, gas or baby is too warm or too cold. Try these tips. To prevent gas, burp your baby during and after feedings. Check your baby's diaper often and change it when wet or soiled. Make sure the diaper is not too tight. Check your baby for sweating or coolness. Add or remove blankets and clothing as needed. If you are ever in doubt about your baby's crying or health, call your baby's doctor.

Calming Your Baby

There are many ways to soothe and calm your baby. Try these and find what works best for your baby.

- Offer a pacifier. Never put the pacifier on a string or cord around the baby's neck. Never use a bottle nipple for a pacifier.
- Wrap your baby snugly in a blanket.
- Rock your baby gently. Hold your baby close and sing or talk in a quiet, singsong way.
- Keep the room quiet and the lights low.
- Put your baby in a soft front carrier, close to your body. Walk or dance with your baby.
- Give your baby a warm relaxing bath.
- Lay your baby next to your skin and gently rub your baby.
- Play soothing music, run the vacuum cleaner, or let the water run a few minutes. Offer your baby a "noisy" toy. Shake or rattle it.
- Put your baby in a baby swing or take your baby for a ride in the stroller or car.

Sometimes nothing works. It is not your fault as long as you have tried to calm your baby and made sure your baby is clean, fed and not sick. Gently put your baby in his/her crib and leave the room. Check on your baby every 15 minutes. If you are concerned about your baby, call your baby's doctor.

Never shake your baby.

The main reason that babies are shaken is because of crying. If you feel you are losing control, gently place your baby in a crib and try one of the following ideas.

- Let your anger out in a safe way. Scrub a floor, do dishes or laundry, shake a rug, or just sit down and have a good cry.
- Calm down. Sit or lie down, close your eyes, take some deep breaths, think of something pleasant for several minutes or count to 100 until you are calm.
- Do something for yourself. Listen to music, exercise, take a shower or bath.
- Stop and think about why you feel so angry. It is okay to feel frustrated, as long as you do not take it out on your baby.
- Call a friend, relative or neighbor to talk about your frustration or see if someone can take over for awhile.
- Contact the 24-hour Parent Connection Line at 614-224-2273, a service of Children's Hospital, to talk to someone who can help you through this time. Remember—crying does not hurt a baby—shaking does.

Talk to your baby's doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns about your baby's crying.