

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 he or she is hungry or uncomfortable. At other times, you may not know why your baby is crying. Babies use crying to communicate their needs. Crying peaks at 2 months and a baby can cry up to 3 hours a day.

When your baby starts crying, try to stop the crying. By responding to the crying quickly, you may keep him or her from getting too upset. You will not “spoil” your baby by doing this. Common causes of crying are wet or soiled diaper, hunger, gas, feeling too warm or too cold, or illness. Try these tips:

- Check diapers often and change when they are wet or soiled. Your baby should have at least 6 wet diapers a day.
- Check clothing or diaper for fit. Make sure the diaper is not too tight or clothing is not irritating the skin.
- Check for hunger. Your baby needs to eat every 3 to 4 hours and may want more food.
- Burp your baby during and after feedings to prevent gas.
- Check your baby's mouth and throat for white spots. This is a sign of infection. Call your baby's doctor.
- Check for sweating or coolness. Add or remove blankets and clothing as needed.

If you have concerns 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.

- Give a pacifier. Never put the pacifier on a string or cord around your 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 on your chest, skin to skin.
- Give your baby an infant massage by gently rubbing your baby.
- Play soothing music, run the vacuum cleaner, or let the water run a few minutes. Give 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 or 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.

Shaking can cause damage to your baby’s brain or even death. Crying is the main reason that babies are shaken. If you feel you are losing control, gently place your baby in a crib and try one of these 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 or 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 feelings or see if someone can take over for a while.

- If you need help, call:
 - ▶ In Central Ohio, the 24-hour Parent Connection Line at (614) 722-5437, a service of Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Columbus, Ohio
 - ▶ Child Help USA® National Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-422-4453, 24 hours a day
 - ▶ Child Abuse National Hotline at 1-800-252-2873

Remember – crying does not hurt a baby – shaking does.

When to Call Your Baby’s Doctor

Most of the time crying will stop when your baby’s “comfort needs” are met. But you should call your baby’s doctor if any of these things occur:

- Your baby is vomiting or has diarrhea.
- Your baby is having less than 6 wet diapers a day.
- Your baby has a fever over 100.4 degrees F or 38 degrees C when taken under the arm.
- Your baby cries constantly for more than 3 hours.
- The cry changes from a fussy to a painful cry.
- The constant crying continues after 3 months of age.
- You cannot soothe your baby no matter what you try.
- You are afraid you might hurt your baby. Never shake your baby.

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

2005 – 5/2010 Health Information Translations

Unless otherwise stated, user may print or download information from www.healthinfotranslations.org for personal, non-commercial use only. The medical information found on this website should not be used in place of a consultation with your doctor or other health care provider. You should always seek the advice of your doctor or other qualified health care provider before you start or stop any treatment or with any questions you may have about a medical condition. The Ohio State University Medical Center, Mount Carmel Health System, OhioHealth and Nationwide Children’s Hospital are not responsible for injuries or damages you may incur as a result of your stopping medical treatment or your failure to obtain medical treatment.