

All About Infant Crying

When your baby cries, they are trying to tell you something. Crying is how a baby communicates. They may be: Hungry; Tired; Hot; Cold; Sick; Or just uncomfortable.

Babies often cry for 2 to 3 hours every day in the first 3 to 4 months of life. And some babies cry more than this. You may notice your baby cries more often around 4 to 6 weeks of age. All babies are different. As long as your baby is content in between periods of crying, the behavior is usually normal.

But trying to comfort a crying baby can be stressful. The good news is: Consistently responding to your child's crying with love and comfort strengthens your bond.

And over time you'll learn what your baby needs when they cry. You may even be able to tell what they need by *how* they cry.

As you and your baby get to know each other, try these tips to comfort your crying baby:

Respond quickly and lovingly. Addressing your baby's needs right away will help them better cope with stress when they're older. Remember, it's impossible to spoil a newborn baby.

Start with the basics. For instance, check if your baby is hungry, has a wet diaper, or may be cold or tired. Or maybe they need to be burped.

Console your baby. Hold them. Sing or talk to them. Or try playing music.

Change the environment. Babies can become overstimulated or even bored. Taking your child for a walk, going for a car ride, or giving them a bath may soothe them.

If you have trouble calming your baby, or if you feel frustrated trying to, ask for help. Sometimes babies respond to a change in caregiver. It doesn't mean you are doing a bad job.

And no matter how much your baby cries or how frustrated you feel, never shake or hit your baby. It can cause serious injury, including brain damage. If you need a break, set your baby down in a safe place and walk away for a couple minutes.

Sometimes a baby can cry a lot more than normal, and for what seems like no reason at all. This excessive crying is called colic. Babies with colic tend to have sudden, loud, and intense bouts of crying that last 3 or more hours a day. They are often hard to soothe.

Although this can be very frustrating, it doesn't mean that anything is wrong. And it usually ends by the time a baby is 3 to 4 months old. If you are concerned about your baby's crying, talk with your child's healthcare provider.

Remember that crying is normal. It will be a main part of your baby's behavior until they are old enough to communicate in other ways. So be patient with yourself and your baby.