



Soothing a Crying Infant

One of the most stressful experiences for new parents is a crying baby. Babies cry for all sorts of reasons, and it's sometimes difficult to figure out why your baby is crying and how to soothe him or her. It's important to remember that crying is one of the main ways that babies communicate, and their crying can mean lots of different things. It is normal for babies to cry more during the first six months of life.

THINGS TO CHECK WHEN A BABY IS CRYING:

- Is the baby sick? Take the baby's temperature, and call a health care provider if there is a fever or if you're not sure about any other symptoms. If your baby cries for hours at a time, be sure to have him or her checked out by a pediatrician.
- Is the baby hungry? Try feeding the baby. Newborns like to eat frequently. Even if the baby isn't hungry, he or she may respond to sucking on a pacifier.
- Is the diaper wet or dirty?
- Is the room too hot or cold, or is the baby overdressed or underdressed?
- Is the baby lonely or afraid? Try holding the baby and comforting him or her.
- Is the baby overstimulated? Try turning down the lights and the noise level.

CALMING THE BABY

- Swaddle the baby in a soft blanket and hold the baby next to you.
- Give the baby a warm bath to relax him or her.
- Sing or hum to the baby.
- Rock the baby in a chair or swing, or gently sway your body while holding the baby close.
- Take the baby for a ride in the stroller or car. Motion often puts a baby to sleep.

Over
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- Distract the baby by making faces or quiet noises.
- Use some “white noise” such as running a vacuum cleaner or hair dryer to help lull the baby to sleep.
- Sometimes it is normal for babies to cry even after all calming techniques have been used.

CALMING YOURSELF

- Take a break. Put the baby safely in a crib, and take a few minutes for yourself in another room.
- Call a friend or relative who will listen to your problem and be sympathetic.
- Ask a trusted friend or neighbor to watch your child while you take a short break or a brief nap. Always be careful who you leave your baby with.

It’s normal for babies to cry sometimes, and it’s certainly normal for parents to feel frustrated by increased crying. You may have received a DVD and booklet at the hospital called the Period of PURPLE Crying® that talked about this. For more information about increased infant crying and soothing techniques, visit purplecrying.info.

For more online tip cards, visit kcsli.org under the “Resources” tab.



Kansas Children's Service League
Stronger families start here.

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