



Crying and How You Can Cope

Crying can be upsetting to parent. But there are some things you can do to help yourself cope.

You & Your Child

A guide for new parents

All babies cry. It's their way of telling us something is wrong. Sometimes they don't feel well. Sometimes they are hungry.

Crying changes during the first 6 months of life. Many babies do not cry a lot right after birth. But crying increases during the first 3 weeks of life. It peaks for most children at 6 to 12 weeks. Most babies cry 1 to 3 hours per day in their first 6 months of life.

Some babies cry more than others

Babies of mothers under a lot of stress may cry more. Babies born after long labors are also likely to cry more. So are babies of mothers who received heavy anesthetic during delivery. Boy babies tend to cry more than girls, especially circumcised boys.

Why do babies cry

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Pay attention to your crying baby immediately

Crying in a young baby is usually a cry for help. If you come to your baby right away, you will teach your baby that he or she can get your attention without much crying.

You will not spoil your baby

In the first 6 to 12 months, helping your baby immediately when he or she cries will not spoil your baby.

Check for certain problems when your baby cries

Common reasons for crying are if your baby is hungry, cold or hot, has a wet or full diaper, is in pain, or is tired. If you find the reason for the crying, correct it.

Ways to calm your baby

- Hold your baby on your shoulder.
- Rock your baby in your arms.
- Wrap your baby snugly in a blanket to prevent arms and legs from swinging and kicking.
- Give your baby something to suck – a pacifier or a clean finger.
- Give baby something pleasant to look at or listen to.

When do you have a serious problem?

Crying is normal. But you should see a doctor if:

- You are very worried about your baby's crying or suspect colic (see next page).
- Your baby never cries.
- Your baby cries uncontrollably every day for several hours after 3 or 3 1/2 months of age.



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Extreme Crying - Colic

About 1 in 5 babies have colic. It usually starts as early as 2 or 3 weeks. It usually ends – sometimes suddenly – around 12 weeks (3 months). It starts and stops later in premature babies.

What is colic?

These babies cry for several hours each day, especially in late afternoon and evening. Crying is intense.

The baby may become rigid with the legs pulled up against the stomach. The baby may pass gas or have bowel movements with great force. Eating and sleeping may be disturbed.

What causes colic?

No one really knows what causes it. Sometimes it is related to what they eat or drink. Usually, however, it is not.

What should you do?

Talk to your doctor. Usually, nothing can be done to stop colic. Sometimes a doctor may try adjusting a baby's diet. Sometimes the doctor may suggest a new way to care for your baby.

Sometimes a walk outside, a car ride, or soft background noise will reduce crying.

Do not try home remedies or "cures" offered by friends or family.

- Be patient and loving, even though it may be hard when your baby is screaming.
- You did not cause your baby's crying and your baby cannot control it.
- It won't last forever. Things usually get better after 3 months.
- See your doctor if crying is not getting better by 6 months.

