

## Soothing a Crying Baby



Having a new baby can be a wonderful time, but it can also be challenging. Babies cry, sometimes a lot. The period of time when babies cry most is 2-4 months of age.

The crying won't last forever!

Check the easy things first.  
Be sure your baby has been fed, burped, changed,  
and is dressed for the weather.

### **Is your baby not feeling well?**

- Check your baby's temperature to rule out a fever.
- If your baby's crying "just doesn't sound right," or if you think your baby might be sick, trust your instincts and call your doctor.

### **Is your baby's tummy upset?**

Gas, colic, or allergies can cause stomach pain.

- Apply pressure by lightly placing your hand on baby's belly or gently move his or her legs in a bicycle motion to relieve pain.
- If you think it has something to do with what your baby eats, check with your doctor.

### **Does your baby have a dirty diaper?**

Some babies let you know *right away* when they need to be changed.



### **Is your baby hungry?**

If baby becomes too hungry they can become extremely fussy and can be difficult to calm and feed.

#### **Learn early hunger signs:**

- Opening and closing mouth.
- Sucking or moving hands to mouth.
- Rooting (baby is searching for food and moving head or opening mouth).

### **Does your baby need to burp?**

Babies swallow air when they breastfeed or suck from a bottle. If the air isn't released, it may cause some pain.

#### **How to burp baby:**

- Hold baby against your chest with his or her chin resting on your shoulder. Gently rub or pat the back.
- Place baby on your lap, supporting his or her chest with one hand and using your other hand to gently rub or pat the back.

### **Is your baby sleepy?**

Instead of nodding off, some babies may fuss and cry, especially if they are overly tired. Learn early sleepy signs.

- Rubbing eyes and/or ears.
- Yawning.
- Closing fists.
- Making fast jerky movements.



### Does your baby want to be held?

Babies need a lot of cuddling!

- Skin-to-skin contact lowers baby's and parent's stress level.
- Skin-to-skin contact is when baby is wearing just a diaper and placed on mom or dad's bare chest.
- Always make sure you are awake and alert when practicing skin-to-skin.

### Are people smoking around your baby?

Never let anyone smoke around your baby.

- Babies exposed to smoke can be more colicky.
- Smoke outside or quit.
- Call (800) QUIT-NOW for help.

### Is your baby too hot or too cold?

- Baby should be dressed in the same amount of clothes as you.
- Remove extra clothing.
- Signs that your baby might be too warm include:
  - Damp hair, sweaty back or chest, red ears or face.

### Is your baby teething?

- On average, the first tooth breaks through between 4 and 7 months.
- Provide a cool cloth or cold teether for baby to suck.

### Is your baby over stimulated or under stimulated?

- Crying can be a baby's way of saying, "I've had enough."
  - Remove baby from loud noises or bright lights.
- Crying can also mean "I'm bored."
  - Change your baby's environment.
  - Listen to music, dance, or go for a walk.

### Are there other things going on with baby?

- Babies can be troubled by something as hard to spot as a hair wrapped tightly around a tiny toe or finger.
- Some babies are extra-sensitive to things like scratchy clothing tags, fabrics or how they are held.

### What other things can be tried to soothe your baby?

- Sucking can help to calm your baby. Offer your breast, a pacifier or your finger to suck.
- Swaddling:
  - Use a sleep sack with swaddling attachments.
  - Do not swaddle after baby shows signs that they are attempting to roll.
  - Always place a swaddled infant to sleep on his or her back, in a crib, bassinet or pack and play and follow all safe sleep guidelines.
- Play music, sing a lullaby or try white noise.
- Get some fresh air.
- Rock baby in your arms or in a chair – put baby in crib when you feel sleepy.
- Talk softly and sweetly to baby.
- Stroke baby's cheek or gently pat baby's back.
- Give baby a warm bath, but check the temperature and provide close supervision.
- Try holding baby skin-to-skin.
- Always keep baby close to you by placing the bassinet or pack and play in your room, near your bed – that way you can soothe quickly when needed.

### How to cope with your crying baby:

- Share baby care with your partner.
- Have a friend or relative take over for you once in a while so you can take a walk or a refreshing shower.
- **If you become angry or frustrated with your baby, take a deep breath and gently lay him on his back in his crib.**
- Check out additional resources on the Period of Purple Crying website at [www.purplecrying.info](http://www.purplecrying.info).
- To learn more about how babies can sleep safely, visit [www.michigan.gov/safesleep](http://www.michigan.gov/safesleep).