

Crying: What should I do?

Why does my baby cry?

- Infant crying in the first 4 to 5 months of life is normal. Crying increases at about 2 weeks, peaks at 2 to 3 months and declines by month 5. Some babies may cry as long as 5 hours a day, some less.
- Since your baby can't talk yet, crying is one way to tell you what they need. Your baby may be telling you that he is hungry, wet, tired, or wants to be held. Your baby may cry at the same time every day. Babies can cry for no exact reason.
- It is hard to listen to crying for a long time. If you try to stop the crying but it just doesn't work, it can be very frustrating.
- If you or other caregivers are sad, upset or tense your baby can sense this and may cry more.

What do I do when my baby cries all the time?

Below are a list of ways to help your baby. Sometimes these may work and other times they may not. Continue to try these even when the baby is calm. The more you use soothing techniques, the more it will help when your infant is crying.

- Check to see if your baby is hungry, tired or needs changing.
- Offer your baby a pacifier. If you think your baby is teething, chill the pacifier.
- Check to see if your baby is too hot or too cold. Check to see if clothes are loose and comfortable.
- Hold your baby against your chest. Walk or gently rock them.
- Walk and sing with your baby.
- Give your baby a warm bath.
- Comfort your baby with hugs and kisses.
- Take your baby for a ride in a stroller or the car. Be sure your baby is safely strapped in the stroller or in an approved car seat in the car.
- Sing to your baby or play soft music.
- Talk to your baby's doctor if crying is a problem.



Be patient. Your baby does not hate you or want to ruin your life. Your baby will outgrow the constant crying. It just takes time.

What can I do if I feel like it's too much to deal with?

If it is too upsetting to listen to the crying, it is **ok** to **walk away**. When parents and caregivers get very upset and don't take a break, they could lose control. Without thinking, they may shake their baby.

- Put your baby in a safe place, like a crib, with the side rails up. Take a break for a few minutes to calm yourself, then go back and check on the baby. If possible, see if someone else can take care of your baby for a half-hour or so.
- **Never pick up or hold your baby if you feel angry.**
- No matter how much the crying bothers you, **never shake your baby!** Hard shaking may cause brain damage, blindness, hearing loss, learning problems, seizures or even death. Letting your baby "cry it out" is much safer for your baby.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.