



All BABIES CRY.

Some babies are easy to comfort, others cry for hours every day no matter what you do. Listening to a baby cry is very hard on parents. You may wonder what's wrong, and feel that you should be able to solve the problem.

Your baby doesn't cry because he is spoiled, angry at you, or trying to control you. Babies love the people who take care of them.

All babies cry sometimes, but you can help your baby cry less

Pick up your baby right away whenever he cries. You cannot spoil a baby. You can teach him to trust you. If you answer his calls for help right away, he'll cry less overall.

Carry your baby in a sling or cloth baby carrier. Babies who are carried many hours every day cry much less.

Some babies do better if they can eat and sleep at regular times every day.

Keep things calm and quiet for a baby who cries when he's tired. Try low lights, and just one adult with your baby.

If your baby cries for a long time every day, and cannot be comforted, check with his doctor or nurse about possible allergies, food intolerance, acid reflux, eczema, or other health conditions.

If your baby is less than six months old and has been eating solid food, try feeding only breast milk or formula until six months.

Comforting your baby

All babies have an instinct to suck. Your baby may need to suck even when she isn't hungry. Try a pacifier, or wash your hands and let your baby suck on your finger, or help your baby find her fingers to suck on.

Babies need to be held. Just being close to you is very comforting for a baby.

A walk in a stroller may help.

Most babies under about four months old are more comfortable when they are firmly wrapped in a soft blanket, or swaddled. Try wrapping your baby with her arms at her sides. Then walk with her or rock her. If she still is unhappy, offer her a pacifier or help her find her fingers to suck on.



Babies also like gentle rhythmic motion, so try holding your baby while you walk, or rock in a rocking chair. Or hold your baby on your shoulder, and sway gently back and forth.

Your baby may need to burp after a feeding or even stop in the middle of a feeding to burp.

Distraction

If your baby is fussing but not crying desperately, try to distract him.

Play peekaboo or hold him up to a window where he can see a busy street or older children playing. Show him a toy or a mobile.

Sounds

Most babies like sounds that remind them of what they heard before they were born. It wasn't quiet inside the womb--the sounds of the mother's heart and blood flow are quite loud. Rhythmic, monotonous, steady sounds are best.

Try a loudly ticking clock, the vacuum cleaner, fan, air-conditioner, dishwasher, washing machine, or dryer. But never put your baby on top of an appliance.

Try taking your baby in the bathroom and turning on the shower and the fan, but not the light.

Sing to your baby.

What doesn't help

Medications including sedatives, antihistamines, drugs for motion sickness, lactase or Simethicone do not work to reduce babies' crying, and may be dangerous. Check with your baby's doctor or nurse before giving your baby any medicine.

When your baby can't stop crying

Undress her and see if something in her clothes is making her uncomfortable, or if there is a strand of hair caught around a finger or toe.

Your baby may be sick. If your baby has vomiting, diarrhea, or a temperature over 100.5°, or seems to be in pain or acts sick, call his doctor or nurse.

Your baby may be teething. Check with your doctor or nurse about what to do.

Try putting your baby in a baby carrier or sling so your hands are free to do other things. Your baby likes to be close to you even when he's unhappy.

Remember that the crying is not directed at you. Your baby is even more miserable than you are.

If you are really frustrated or angry

Put the baby down on her back in a safe place, like the crib, and leave the room until you are calmer. Take a break from the sound of crying.

Put on music with headphones, or take a shower with the fan on.

Call a friend, or your mom or dad, just to talk.

The **Parental Stress Line** offers free anonymous phone support, 24/7 at **1-800-632-8188** (assistance available in other languages).

Taking care of yourself

Not getting enough sleep makes everything harder. Try to nap when your baby does.

There may be a mother's group nearby, or a Family Resource Center in your city. **Parents Helping Parents** at **1-800-632-8188** can help you find a parents' group.

Or try **www.onetoughjob.org** for parenting tips.

NEVER SHAKE A BABY.

Shaking or hitting a baby can cause permanent brain damage or death.

For more information call 617-624-5490 (assistance available in other languages) or go to www.mass.gov/dph/fch.