
Crying

Why do babies cry?

Crying is a form of communication. Your baby has different cries for different needs. Frequent causes of crying are:

- Hunger, especially if it has been over 2 hours since the last feed
- Discomfort, such as wet or dirty diapers, too tight clothing, too hot or too cold
- Need for position change
- Stuffy nose preventing easy breathing
- A form of tension release
- Over stimulation. Some premature babies are highly irritable. They may have a low tolerance for activity around them or frequent contact with the caregiver.
- Illness. If your baby's cry suddenly changes in intensity or seems abnormal for him/her, talk to your doctor.

Your baby will develop a trust that you will be there when s/he cries if you respond to all crying. This sense of trust will be a necessary foundation in his development.

What can I do if my baby cries frequently?

Many premature babies will have days of frequent crying. They can be more sensitive to stimulation and they can be more sensitive to gas pains.

- Be sure your baby is not wet, hungry or uncomfortable.
- Burp your baby every five minutes while feeding.
- Be sure your infant is not ill (fever, diarrhea, poor colour).
- Swaddle your baby by wrapping his arms and legs snugly in a blanket.
- Rock your baby or place baby securely in an infant swing.
- Hold your baby skin to skin on your chest.
- Walk with your baby or take your baby for a ride in the car securely fastened in a car seat.
- Keep your baby's head higher than the rest of the body while feeding.
- Place a warmed rolled towel under your baby's stomach when lying down or give your baby a warm bath.

Many parents find that it is very difficult to keep in control during a frantic crying episode. Try to remain calm. Call for help especially if you feel so stressed that you fear that you might hurt the baby. It is always okay to check with your doctor, with any concern you may have.

Reprinted with permission from the University of Wisconsin