

Crying

Crying is one way babies communicate. All babies cry, some more than others.

Babies cry because they're hungry, tired, wet, or lonely and want to be held. Colicky babies cry for a long time and are difficult to comfort. And some babies cry when they are sick. (It's always a good idea to call your doctor if you think your baby is sick.)

For whatever reason, it's not easy to listen to a baby cry. Here are some things you can try to calm your baby:

- Check the diaper and change it if needed.
- Offer the baby a pacifier.
- Swaddle the baby in a blanket and hold it closely, try singing and dancing slowly.
- Feed the baby slowly and remember to burp it often.
- Take the child for a car or stroller ride.
- Rock the baby in your arms or an infant seat.

It takes time to get to know what each cry means and how to calm and comfort your baby. If you become frustrated and feel you're losing control, try:

- Putting your baby safely in a crib with the side rails up and leaving the room.
- Calling someone who can relieve you or talk with you until you relax.
- Taking a shower.
- Listening to your favorite music or watching TV.

Never shake a baby. Shaking can cause serious injury and sometimes death.

Crying will not harm a baby, but an angry caregiver can.

Family Focus is a series of positive parenting tips and information sheets developed by specialists at Children's Hospitals and Clinics, Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN. For a complete list of topics, visit our Web site: www.childrenshc.org, and click on "For Families and Patients" then "Positive Parenting."

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