

# Coping With Crying

**Parents know their newborns will cry, but many are surprised by how much crying they hear. During the first three months of life, a healthy newborn's fussy periods can add up to two or three hours a day.**

## **These tips can help you cope.**

- **Try not to take your baby's tears personally.** Crying is a natural instinct for babies. In fact, it's one way babies communicate! (i.e. hunger, fear, pain, a need for closeness.)
- **Don't worry that you'll spoil your baby if you comfort her every time she cries.** Your comfort offers reassurance and helps her develop the ability to trust.
- **To comfort a crying baby, first see if she is wet, hungry or just needs a blanket.** If that doesn't work, try holding her close to you, rocking, walking or singing softly to her. If she's still fussing, try putting her down in her crib and patting her back or rubbing her cheek. If she begins to settle down within a few minutes, she may simply be telling you it's nap time.
- **If nothing seems to console your baby, call your pediatrician.** Babies who cry for hours and hours every day may have colic. Although colic is very upsetting to parents, it is not dangerous for the child. Babies with colic grow normally and are usually in good health. Most babies outgrow colic by 12 weeks of age.
- **Realize that being with a newborn is very stressful.** Get as much rest as you can when your baby naps. Allow a trusted friend or family member to babysit while you recharge your batteries. Baby yourself a little, too!
- **If you ever feel so frustrated that you fear you might hit or shake your baby, put the baby down in the crib and walk into another room.** It's OK to let a baby cry for a few minutes while you pull yourself together.



## For infants 3 months and under, try using Dr. Harvey Karp's 5S system that initiates and maximizes the infant's own built-in calming reflex:

- **Swaddle** your baby snugly in a big, thin blanket (42 inches square) during fussy times and to help the baby sleep. Snug swaddling provides continuous touching and supports the infant's sense of security.
- **Side/stomach hold.** Place your baby on the left side to assist in digestion or on the stomach to provide reassuring support. Never leave your newborn alone on the side or stomach. Infants should always be placed on their backs to sleep.
- **Shushing** sounds imitate the continual whooshing sound made by the blood flowing through arteries near the womb and provide the baby comfort. Try a strong five-second "shush" close to the baby's ear, and once the fussiness lessens, lower the intensity.
- **Swinging.** Newborns are used to the swinging motions within their mother's womb. Fussy babies calm fastest with quick, tiny movements like a rocking motion an inch or so back and forth. Support the baby's neck and head. Rocking, car rides, and other swinging or swaying movements all can help. Never shake a baby!
- **Sucking** has effects deep within the nervous system, triggers the calming reflex, and releases natural calming chemicals within the brain. Allow your baby to breast feed or suck on your finger. Avoid pacifiers until your baby is nursing really well.

For more information on the 5S system go to [www.thehappiestbaby.com](http://www.thehappiestbaby.com).

Your child's pediatrician should be your primary source of advice about your child's health.

Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1 (757) 668-8246

주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다.  
1 (757) 668-8246