

# Soothing Your Fussy Baby

## Why might your baby be crying?

Crying is normal and serves several useful purposes. It can be difficult however to see your baby upset. The following questions may be helpful to ask yourself while trying to comfort him or her.

### ■ Is your baby hungry?

- Keep track of feeding times and look for early hunger signs like lip smacking or moving his/her fists to mouth.

### ■ Does your baby have an upset stomach?

- Hold your baby laying on his or her left side to help digestion or on his or her stomach for support. You can also gently rub his or her back. Remember: if he/she falls asleep, lay your baby on his or her back in a crib.

### ■ Does your baby have a food sensitivity?

- Try changing your baby's diet. Moms who are breastfeeding: try changing your own diet by reducing the amount of dairy products or caffeine you consume. Avoiding spicy foods or foods that give you gas may also help.

### ■ Is your baby being overfed?

- Avoid overfeeding your baby by waiting at least two to two and a half hours from the beginning of one feeding to the next.

### ■ Are your baby's naps too long?

- Limit each daytime nap to no longer than three hours a day.

### ■ Is your baby spitting or vomiting excessively?

- Time to call the doctor. If your baby is fussy after feeding, has excessive spitting or vomiting, or is losing/not gaining weight, talk to your child's healthcare providers.

### ■ Is your baby wet or soiled?

### ■ Is your baby too hot or too cold?

- Dress your baby in about the same layers of clothing that you are wearing to be comfortable.

### ■ Is your baby sick?

- Check your baby's temperature. If your baby is younger than two months old and has a fever, call your baby's doctor immediately.

### ■ Is your baby bored?

- Quietly sing to your baby, hum a song or play soft music. Go for a walk outside if weather allows.

### ■ Is your baby overstimulated?

## Here's what other moms have tried to calm a fussy baby:

- Turn on a calming sound that reminds your baby of being in the womb (e.g., white noise, humming sound of a fan, recording of a heartbeat).
- Rock your baby or hold him/her close to you in a body carrier.
- Gently stroke your baby's head or pat him/her on the back or chest.

- Take your baby for a ride in the car. Make sure that your baby is secured properly in a car seat.
- Burp your baby to relieve any trapped gas bubbles.
- Give your baby a warm bath.
- If it's not time to feed your baby, offer a pacifier (once breastfeeding has been established) or help your baby find his or her thumb.
- Keep a diary of when your baby is awake, asleep, eating and crying. Write down how long it takes your baby to eat and take note if your baby cries the most after eating. Talk with your healthcare provider about these behaviors to see if your baby's crying is related to sleeping or eating.
- Avoid bright lights and loud noises when you feed or change your baby during the night.





It's important to remember that sometimes a crying baby just can't be soothed. No parent can console his or her baby every time. It's important to not take your baby's crying personally and to establish realistic expectations. Babies tend to cry one to four hours total each day and often there isn't an apparent cause. No matter how frustrated you feel, do not shake your baby. Shaking your baby can cause blindness, brain damage or even death. If you are struggling to handle the situation, get help from a family member or friend.

*These recommendations were adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics.*

**If you have any questions or concerns, call your local WIC Clinic.**

For more information about the Ohio WIC Program  
Call 1-800-755-GROW

For more information about infant safe sleep  
visit [www.safesleep.ohio.gov](http://www.safesleep.ohio.gov)

For more information about breastfeeding visit  
[www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/](http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/)

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