

Crying and colic

Understanding why

All babies cry, especially in the first few weeks after birth. Crying is their way of letting you know they need something or are uncomfortable. They may need changing, they may be hungry or just need a cuddle. Whether you are bottle feeding or breastfeeding, always burp your baby after a feed as this will help. To burp your baby, sit your baby upright or hold them against your shoulder and gently rub their back and tummy until they burp. They may vomit a small amount of milk when you do this.

Early signs that your baby may be hungry are things like putting their hands to their mouth, becoming restless and stretching. By recognising these cues you may avoid hunger crying altogether and the need to calm baby down before a feed. Your baby may be crying because they need a cuddle and want to be close to you.

If you feel you can't cope with your baby's crying, make sure baby is safe - like in a cot or pram, leave the room and calm down for a few minutes. It can help to talk to other parents and your Health Visitor. For more information and tips on ways to soothe your baby visit www.copingwithcrying.org.uk or www.cry-sis.org.uk 08451 228669.

Colic

If your baby cries suddenly and often, but they otherwise appear to be happy and healthy, they may have colic. Colic is common and although uncomfortable it is not serious and usually affects babies only in the first few months of their lives and improves on its own. The most common symptom of colic is continuous crying, which typically occurs in the late afternoon or evening. Other signs include a flushed appearance, drawing their legs to their chest, clenching fists, passing wind and trouble sleeping. Your local Pharmacist may be able to supply over-the-counter medicine to help relieve pain from colic which may be caused by swallowing air (trapped gas).

Doctor says

If your baby's crying seems different in any way (such as a very high-pitched cry or a whimper), then seek medical advice. Crying can sometimes be a sign that your baby is unwell. Trust your instincts - you know your baby best.

Health Visitor says

You will know your baby best of all. Try to understand what it is they need. Finding out why your baby is crying is often a matter of going through all the possible options.

Things to check first are:

- Does their nappy need changing?
- Could they be hungry?

- Could they be too hot?
- Could they be too cold?
- Do they need burping?

These are simple things which could be causing your baby to cry.

The 10 minute 'Coping with Crying' DVD from the NSPCC provides a range of tips and advice on helping you keep calm and soothing your baby.

Ask your Midwife or Health Visitor to see a copy of the DVD. <http://copingwithcrying.org.uk/>