



# **Crying Baby**

**handle with care**



## **Remember:**

- **Crying is an annoying sound.**
- **All parents can feel frustrated, tired, or overwhelmed at one time or another.**
- **It is more important to stay calm than to stop the crying.**

# Why is your baby crying?

Crying is a normal behavior for infants. All babies cry, but some cry more than others. Research has shown that periods of crying begin to increase around 2 weeks of age, reach a peak at 6 weeks, and then may gradually decrease over the next 6 weeks.

Crying is an annoying sound, which is intended to get our attention. Crying is the only way babies have to speak to us. Babies may cry because they are hungry, tired, need a diaper change, or want to be comforted. Sometimes, it is not easy to understand why a baby is crying. Most babies will occasionally experience long periods of crying that cannot be easily soothed.





Research has shown that when parents respond to their baby's cries in the early weeks of life, their baby tends to cry less by his or her first birthday. Attachment is the term used to describe the special relationship you will develop with your baby as you learn to read and respond to your baby's cues. When you respond to your baby in a warm and sensitive way, your baby learns to trust that you love

him and will protect him. This is how you develop a secure attachment with your baby. Just as babies need food and sleep to survive and grow, they need physical contact to thrive. The more you touch, cuddle, kiss, and interact with your baby, the more brain cells and nerve pathways will grow in your baby's brain to help her learn.

**Babies cry for a lot of reasons but never to make you angry or to control you. You cannot spoil a baby by responding to his or her cries.**

# What can a parent do?

Respond to your baby's cries. Over time, you will learn to know what the different cries mean.

## Meet the basic needs of your baby first.

- Feed your baby
- Check the diaper
- Speak softly
- Comfort your baby



## If these needs are met and your baby is still crying, try the following ideas:

- hold your baby in a different way,
- burp your baby,
- play soft music or "white noise" as background sound,
- rock your baby,
- snuggle your baby close to you skin to skin,
- go for a walk with your baby,
- move to a quiet, darkened room to decrease the amount of stimulation for your baby, or
- ask for help from a support person (neighbour, friend, partner, family member).



## All parents can feel frustrated

Crying may mean that your baby is not feeling well. If you are worried, take your baby to the doctor. There may be times when you can't settle your baby's crying. This is a normal experience for all parents; however, it can be very frustrating. Also, if you are tired, ill, or stressed, it can be hard to be calm and supportive with your baby. It is important to take steps to manage your own feelings in order to meet your baby's needs. Taking a few deep breaths or giving yourself a reassuring message such as "this will be okay", "all babies cry", or "this will pass" may help calm you down.

## It is more important to stay calm than to stop the crying.

If you feel that you can't cope with your baby's crying at that moment, put your baby safely and calmly into the crib. It is not harmful to leave your baby crying in a safe place for a short time until you are calm. Call for help if you are having difficulty calming down. It is helpful to know all parents feel these emotions at one time or another. It may help just to talk to another person.

Babies have weak neck muscles and heavy heads. Even a few seconds of forceful shaking can cause serious damage to babies and small children. Although it is unlikely that injuries would occur from handling an infant, parents and caregivers should always consider how easily an infant's brain can be hurt. Always support an infant's head and neck. Even minor injuries to a baby's brain can cause life long problems. Shaking a baby in a moment of frustration can cause blindness, brain damage, or death.



**No matter how upset you feel, never, never, never shake a baby.**

# Where can a parent go for help?

Babies rely on you and other caregivers to meet their needs. This can be very stressful and demanding. The following organization can provide important information about your child's development as well as support you as a parent.

Adapted with permission from KFL&A Public Health



**HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT**

Durham Health Connection Line  
1-800-841-2729 or 905-666-6241

**[durham.ca/parenting](https://durham.ca/parenting)**

If you require this information in an accessible format,  
contact 905-666-6241 or 1-800-841-2729



Sept 2016