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## **LITTLE BABY – WHY ARE YOU CRYING?**

All babies cry- even when the best parental care is present.

In the first 2-3 months, most babies cry for lots of different reasons. Crying usually increases over the first 2-3 weeks. By the 3-6 week age range, most babies have a fussy or fretful period of up to three to four hours a day.

Studies have shown that normal, healthy babies may cry this much in a day until they outgrow this “fussy” period, usually by 6-12 weeks of age. Parents may feel anxious, frustrated, angry, and/or fatigued when crying occurs. It is especially hard to cope when you are tired, as most new parents are.

### **What You Can Do**

Because you will undoubtedly deal with some crying, here are some ideas to help you *and* your crying baby:

- ✓ Pick your baby up and hold him/her. This is a normal and natural thing to do for a fussy baby. Babies cannot be spoiled at this age by being held. Touching and holding a baby helps them to be happier. Holding your baby establishes a sense of trust, which is so important for a baby’s emotional development.
- ✓ Feed and/or burp again.
- ✓ While holding your baby, rock, sway or walk your baby. Movement is pleasant for babies.
- ✓ Gently bounce, jiggle or pat. Hold your baby in the “colic” hold position- face down with your arm underneath, supporting the abdomen and their chin.
- ✓ Take your baby for a ride in a stroller, carriage or car seat.
- ✓ Use your voice to hum, sing or talk softly and slowly- It’s best to use a dull or “sleep-producing” hum.



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- ✓ Use a baby carrier - You can place a baby into the front carrier and your baby will benefit from the movement, warmth and swaddling against your chest, while you are able to benefit by having hands free to do other things.
- ✓ Let your baby rest on your chest or abdomen before putting the baby down.
- ✓ Use noises or music. Try a radio station, white noise, fan or hair dryer, etc. A variety of dulling sounds can be calming to a baby.
- ✓ Try tight swaddling. In other words, wrap your baby tightly in a blanket so the distraction of their arm and leg movement is decreased.
- ✓ Try a pacifier. It may be necessary to hold it in your baby's mouth at first, or place a drop of breast milk or formula on it before giving it to the baby. Your baby will be soothed and occupied by sucking for a while.
- ✓ Try skin to skin contact-parent to baby. Try stroking and massaging your baby.
- ✓ When trying to help a crying baby, try to relax yourself. Practice "letting go" of your body muscles, similar to relaxation in child birth classes or Yoga. This helps transmit a sense of security and calm. Hold your baby firmly and close to your body and breathe slowly.
- ✓ Exercise your right as a parent to some relief, sleep and time for yourself. Get a family member, friend or sitter to stay with your baby while you sleep, or go out for a while.
- ✓ **NEVER SHAKE YOUR BABY!** Always handle your baby gently. If all else has failed and you're feeling emotionally overwhelmed, or at your "wits end", safely put your baby down in their crib and walk out of the room. Immediately call a friend, family member or 1-800-CHILDREN for help and emotional support. Phone lines are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.