

# All Babies Cry

*You know that your baby is going to cry, but before she arrives, you have no idea how long, how loudly, or how intensely. You also have no idea how your baby's crying will affect you.*

You may find your baby's crying to be quite disturbing. It can grate on the nerves of even the most patient parents.

You may feel that your baby is upset and crying more than anyone else's baby.

Remember that:

- At about two weeks of age, some babies begin to cry more each week.
- During the second month, babies usually cry more than at any other time.
- After 2 months, babies begin to cry less each week.

New babies don't talk, but they are good at crying. Crying is your baby's way of communicating her needs.

What is the crying saying?

- I'm hungry 1
- I'm still hungry 1
- I'm hot and thirsty
- I need to suck
- It hurts
- I'm going to poop
- I'm tired
- I need you to hold me and talk to me
- I don't like it when you're tired and tense

## *What is this like for parents?*

- Parents try everything they can think of to soothe baby and baby won't stop crying.
- The baby's face looks as if she is in pain. Be reassured that nothing is wrong.
- Parents end up feeling frustrated, especially if they expected a calm and content baby. They feel like they can't take care of their baby. They feel like bad parents.
- Parents feel like a failure.

Remember that:

- Not being able to soothe an infant does not make Mom and Dad bad parents.
- Some babies are just going to cry.
- The crying will soon end and your life will be so much better.

## *Ways to Soothe Your Fussy Baby*

- Feed your baby. The main reason babies cry is because they are hungry. Even if it hasn't been that long since your baby was fed, hunger may still be the cause of the crying.
- Make sure baby is not too hot or cold. Some babies like to be wrapped up tightly in a light blanket.
- Hold your baby close to you with skin to skin contact, or put her in a sling or against your chest - whatever is most comfortable for you and baby.

- Make a shushing sound.

- Rock baby gently in a rocking chair, walk around, or dance with baby. A baby swing, massage, soft music or singing a lullaby, or a bath may also reduce the crying.
- Check your baby's diaper – your baby may be crying to let you know it is time for a diaper change.

- Try a change of scenery. Go outside for a walk. Exercise relieves your stress while settling baby. 1

- Create "white noise". Some babies like the sound of the vacuum, fan, dishwasher or running water.

## *Get Support*

- The crying can be extremely frustrating, but try to stay calm. Take turns with your partner taking time out. 1
- Know that the crying may get worse before it gets better. Crying usually increases during the second month. After 2 months, babies begin to cry less each week. 1
- Let others help you – keep a list handy of 3 friends you can call who will listen without judging you, or even come over to relieve you. 1
- Take friends and family up on their offers to care for the baby for a while. Long periods of crying can be very stressful for parents. It is normal to feel frustrated and helpless when you are unable to comfort your baby. Moms and Dads need some time for themselves too.
- Join a Baby Group – by getting together with other mothers who have babies the same age, you can share stories and see that you are not alone.
- Take a Break – If you feel overwhelmed, it is ok to put baby in a safe place and take a few minutes to calm down. Have a chat with a friend, have a snack – do something else for a few minutes. This will help you regain the energy you need to deal with your baby.
- No matter how upset you feel, don't shake your baby. Shaking a baby is very dangerous and can damage a child's brain. Shaking can cause permanent disabilities like blindness or paralysis. Shaking can even cause death.
- Tell others. Make sure family members and everyone who might care for your baby about normal crying and the dangers of shaking a baby.
- *Keep believing that, eventually, the periods of crying will pass.*