

# Babies cry a lot. *It's normal.*

*Learn more and have a plan. Keep your baby safe!*

## All babies cry. It is normal and natural.

*Most adults feel frustrated when babies and toddlers cry.*

Healthy babies start crying the day they are born. Crying increases when babies are 2 weeks old, and gets worse at 2 months old. Babies cry more in the afternoon or evening. Babies can cry 2 to 3 hours a day, for an hour at a time! It is normal.

Crying is the only way your baby can communicate. Your baby cries to tell you he:

- Is hungry.
- Needs to be burped.
- Needs a diaper change.
- Is too hot or too cold.
- Is lonely or scared.
- Is in pain or uncomfortable.
- Is over-tired or over-stimulated.

### **Never shake your baby!**

**No matter how long your baby cries or how frustrated you feel, never shake or hit your baby.**

Shaking can cause brain damage that can lead to:

- Blindness
- Deafness
- Epilepsy (seizures)
- Cerebral palsy
- Mental retardation
- Learning problems
- Behavior problems
- Poor coordination
- Death

Shaken baby syndrome is a brain injury that happens when a frustrated person violently shakes a baby or toddler.

## Tips for soothing crying babies.

*Sometimes, a crying baby just can't be soothed. It is OK to ask for help.*

Because all babies cry, try not to let the crying frustrate you. Check for the common reasons for crying, then try some of the following:

- Hold the baby close and walk or gently rock. Wrap the baby snugly in a soft blanket.
- Find a calm, quiet place. Turn out the lights; turn off loud music and the TV.
- Offer a pacifier.
- Take the baby for a ride in a stroller or car. Always use a car seat.
- Play soft music; hum or sing to the baby.
- Run the vacuum, dryer, dishwasher or fan to make background noise.
- Place the baby in a baby swing.
- Lay the baby across your lap and gently rub or tap the baby's back.
- If all else fails, place the baby on her back in a safe crib or playpen. Walk away and check back every 5 to 10 minutes.
- Call your baby's doctor or nurse if your baby seems sick.
- If you feel you are getting stressed out, call a trusted friend or relative for help.

### **Toddlers cry, too.**

Toddlers cry for the same reasons babies cry. Plus, toddlers cry when they try to learn new things. Toddlers and their crying can be especially frustrating at times such as:

- Potty training
- Feeding time.
- Naptime and bedtime.
- When teething.

# Calm yourself, so you can calm your baby safely.

Caring for babies and toddlers is stressful, even when they are not crying. Know when you are becoming stressed out. Have a plan to calm yourself.

**After putting your baby on his back in a safe crib or playpen:**

- Take several deep breaths and count to 100. Go outside for fresh air.
- Wash your face, or take a shower.
- Exercise. Do sit-ups, or climb the stairs a few times.
- Go in another room and turn on the TV or radio.
- Call a friend or relative.

**Check on your baby every 5 to 10 minutes.**

**You are your baby's protector.  
Choose caregivers wisely.**

Even when you aren't with your baby, you are responsible for your baby's safety.

Before leaving your baby with anyone, ask these questions:

- Does this person want to watch my baby?
- Have I had a chance to watch this person with my baby before I leave?
- Is this person good with babies?
- Has this person been a good caregiver to other babies?
- Will my baby be in a safe place with this person?
- Have I told this person to never shake my baby?

**Trust your instinct. If it doesn't feel right, don't leave your baby!**

Do not leave your baby with anyone who:

- Is impatient or annoyed when your baby cries.
- Says your baby cries too much.
- Will become angry if your baby cries or bothers them.
- Might treat your baby roughly because they are angry with you.
- Has a history of violence.
- Has lost custody of their own children because they could not care for them.
- Abuses drugs or alcohol.

**Has Your Baby Been Shaken?**

**Call 911.**

All of these signs are very serious:

- Limp, like a rag doll.
- Poor sucking and swallowing.
- Trouble breathing.
- Unable to waken.
- Irritability or crankiness.
- Seizures or trembling.
- Vomiting.
- Skin looks blue or feels cold.

Save precious time! If you think your baby has been shaken, tell the doctors right away!

**Tell anyone who cares for your baby to call you any time they become frustrated. Tell them not to shake your baby.**

**For more help coping with a crying baby:**

  
**1-800-755-GROW**



Ohio Department of Health  
246 North High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
<http://www.odh.ohio.gov>