



**ZERO TO THREE**  
Early connections last a lifetime



# Baby Crying Basics

## Why is my baby crying?

**Crying is how your baby communicates.** They cry for many reasons. They may be hungry, hot, gassy, tired, dirty, bored, or just plain done with the day! Your job is to figure out why they are crying so you can soothe them. Sometimes that will be easy. Sometimes it will be impossible. Remember that for the past 9 months, your baby was always safe, cozy, and warm in the womb. So just being out in the world sometimes feels like too much.

## What is a normal amount of crying?

**Most babies cry a lot between 3 to 8 weeks old.** Crying is usually the worst at 6 weeks. They might cry for between 1–5 hours each day. Most babies cry a lot in the evenings. By 3 months, most babies cry much less.

## How can I make my baby stop crying?

Inside the womb, your baby was warm and snug. They were floating in amniotic fluid and could always hear a heart beating and blood rushing. You may be able to soothe your baby with sounds and feelings that remind them of that time.

You can try **swaddling** them, making **shushing** sounds in their ear, and **rocking** them. Giving them a pacifier to **suck** on can help a lot, too. Going outside for **fresh air** can be great. Or holding them close to your **skin**. Try them all to see what works best.

## Will soothing my baby spoil them?

No! Soothing your fussy baby will teach them that you are there to help. It helps them know that they are deeply loved and cared for. They will learn that they are not alone in the world. Soothing your baby teaches them that they can rely on you and trust you!



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## **What is colic?**

Some babies cry more than others and are harder to soothe. Colic is when a healthy, well-fed baby cries more than 3 hours a day, at least 3 days each week, for more than 3 weeks. No one knows why babies get colic. But all babies grow out of it and do not have any long-term problems.

## **What if the crying upsets me?**

Many caregivers feel this way. Older children and adults cry because they are sad, angry, or in pain. When a baby cries, it can feel like there is no reason for the crying. Caregivers may feel guilty or frustrated when they cannot soothe their baby. But you are not to blame for your baby's crying! They are just going through a period of fussiness. Crying and colic always get better, and babies do not stay fussy forever.

### **Most important:**

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

It is ok to let them cry for a while in a crib while you get calm.

## **What if the crying will not stop?**

Sometimes, even when you try many different things, your baby just will not stop crying. That is okay. Ask someone to help or just put your baby down somewhere safe, like a crib. Take a break to calm yourself. It is better to put babies down, rather than trying to soothe them when you are angry or overwhelmed.

When you are able to soothe *yourself*, it is easier to be patient and soothe your baby. Your baby is doing their best, and so are you! Sometimes a short break is what you both need to feel better. Lots of caregivers feel overwhelmed when caring for a new baby. Ask trusted family or friends for help, or let your doctor know if you are struggling.

Call your baby's healthcare provider if you are worried about how much your baby is crying.

You can also call The **Fussy Baby Network** for support:

**1-800-431-BABY (2229)**