

# CRYING AND COMFORT TECHNIQUES

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## **Crying**

- Crying is an important communication tool for baby.
- Cries may mean baby is hungry, needs to be changed, is sick or in pain, tired, bored, lonely, or over-stimulated.
- Many babies have a predictable fussy time each day. This peaks at around 6 weeks of age, and then gradually decreases.
- Don't be afraid to respond when baby cries – it won't spoil him/her. When you respond promptly, baby learns to trust you to meet his/her needs. Babies who are picked up promptly when they cry during the first 6 months cry less the second 6 months.

## Comforting Techniques

Try only one or two techniques at a time to avoid overstimulating baby. You will learn what helps calm your baby the best.

- Hold baby, keeping arms and legs close to his/her body with your hand or by swaddling, and walk or rock while talking or singing softly.
- Try walking with a slight bounce in your step.
- Carry baby in a front carrier.
- Sit and hold baby face down on your lap, or with your hand under baby's tummy. Lie on your back with your baby face down on top of you.
- Gently massage baby's back.
- Put baby in wind-up swing; be sure head is supported.
- Take baby out of house for fresh air and a walk.
- Take baby for a ride in a car in an approved car seat.
- Give baby a bath. Many babies enjoy a warm (not hot) bath.
- If you are frustrated, lay baby in the crib and let him/her cry for about 15 minutes before picking up again.

## Coping With Crying

- Realize that these crying periods will decrease.
- Don't take the crying personally. It is frustrating to be unable to calm baby, but baby is not rejecting you.
- Take a break from baby. Find a good caregiver and do something for yourself outside of the home.
- Accept help from friends and family who offer to provide a meal or watch your baby for a while.
- Talk with other parents who have had the same experience.

## Abusive Head Trauma/Shaken Baby Syndrome

- Prolonged crying in infants is a major trigger for abusive head trauma, formerly known as shaken baby syndrome.
- Remember, never shake, hit or handle a baby roughly. This can cause permanent damage.
- If parents feel frustrated with crying, place baby in a crib or another safe place, and call a caregiver to relieve you and do something to calm yourself.
- Choose a good caregiver carefully. Let them know what techniques work best to calm your baby.
- If your baby cries a lot, refer to the booklet, "Period of Purple Crying," given at discharge or visit [dontshake.com](http://dontshake.com).