

[Home](#) > How to settle a crying baby

Share this Article

X

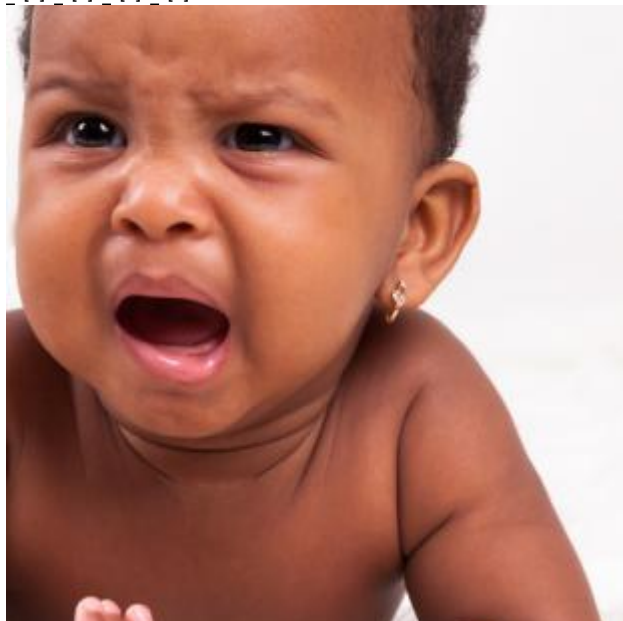


How to settle a crying baby

Crying is your baby's first form of communication and is designed to provoke adults into action. Your baby's cry tugs at your heart strings leaving you feeling anxious, tense and guilty for not knowing why your baby is crying and what you can do to comfort them.

<https://www.babyandme.nestle.info/how-settle-crying-baby> ^[1]

[\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#) [\[4\]](#) [\[5\]](#)



How to settle a crying baby

Crying is your baby's first form of communication and is designed to provoke adults into action. Your baby's cry tugs at your heart strings leaving you feeling anxious, tense and guilty for not knowing why your baby is crying and what you can do to comfort them.

Wednesday, December 30th, 2015

- ^[6]
- [Print](#) ^[1]
- [Share](#)

Here are some reasons why your baby cries:

- Hunger;
- Physical discomfort such as too hot, cold, sick, abdominal bloating, wind or pain;
- Overstimulated;
- Tired or overtired;
- Passing a bowel movement;
- In need of a reassuring cuddle;
- Colic;
- Teething;
- Release of accumulated stress

It is normal for your baby to cry a lot during the early months. While some babies cry a little and softly, others cry excessively and loud. The prime reason your baby cries is because they have an inability to convey their needs in words. In the early days you may not be able to understand the reason why your baby is crying, but gradually as you get to know them intimately, you can start to understand what the cries are communicating.

Settling techniques and patience will be needed to cope during these crying times. Some of the following points may also help:

A hunger cry

- If breast-fed, your newborn will need to breastfeed every few hours during the day and when they wake overnight (unless instructed otherwise by your health care professional).
- Breast feed from one breast each feed until the breast is empty. Keep your baby awake while feeding to ensure a good nutritive suck to satisfy their hunger. Offer the second breast if your baby is not settled and still appears hungry;
- You may need to wake your baby for feeds if they sleep too long during the day but discuss this with your health professional. You will also need to feed more frequently during growth spurts;
- Make sure there is good attachment to the breast otherwise your baby will tire before getting enough milk. They will then only sleep for a short period before they are hungry again. Seek professional help if poor attachment or painful, cracked nipples continue;
- Have your baby weighed by a health care professional regularly during their first couple of months to ensure they are putting on a desired amount of weight;

Physical Discomfort

- Massaging your baby daily will help calm your baby's maturing nervous system;
- Have your baby assessed for reflux if they are: – often unsettled and crying – will not lie happily

- flat on their back – screams after vomiting – gulps and swallows even when not feeding – hiccoughs frequently – has difficulty settling to sleep
- Identify any intolerance to foods. There are tell-tale signs and symptoms that can be assessed by your health care professional. Some of these signs include but are not limited to eczema or rashes, cradle cap, vomiting, bowel changes, excessive wind and bloating;
- Prevent overfeeding your baby;
- As a guide to ensure your baby is not too hot, or cold, dress your baby with one layer more than you;
- Try using a dummy. Sucking can be comforting to some babies;
- Sing or read to your baby. The rhythmical sounds of your voice are calming so don't worry if you are off key!
- Observe for fever, lethargy, and less than six wet nappies in a day. Any of these symptoms may require a visit to the doctor.

Over stimulated

- Allow your baby space after each feed to move their limbs and be free from being held. Different temperaments will cope with different amounts of touch;
- Be aware that your baby may find lights, smells and noise of different places outside the home overwhelming and will be unsettled and cry either during the visit or after returning home;
- Try to reduce the time they are passed around from person to person for cuddles. Too many cuddles from too many different people can be tiring.

Tiredness

- Be mindful of how much sleep ^[7] your baby requires and ensure they are given the opportunity to sleep at regular intervals;
- Establish sleep cues such as swaddling or offer a dummy. Sucking can be very soothing for some babies;
- Become aware of, and watch out for tired signs such as jerky limb movements, facial grimacing, yawning, breaking eye contact and clenched fists. These are signs that your baby is ready to be settled to sleep.

Overtired

- Try not to ignore the tired signs outlined above, as this is the window of opportunity that makes it easier for your baby to settle into sleep;
- Your baby will not attend well to the bottle or breast if they are overtired. Therefore, always feed them soon after they wake instead of before they are about to sleep;
- If your baby cries, they do not need to cry it out alone in their cot, instead hold them and be calm and comfort them;
- When your overtired baby finally falls asleep, their sleep may be restless and shortened, lasting only 15 – 20 minutes. Therefore try to avoid your baby getting to this stage. If they do wake too early, resettle them back to sleep.

Passing a bowel movement

- Your baby may cry before a bowel movement. It should not be associated with any other bowel changes such as blood, mucous, froth or anal fissures which are signs that need to be addressed by a health professional.

In need of a cuddle

- Prior to being born your baby has been close to the sound of your heartbeat and aware of other rhythmical muffled sounds from the womb and outside noises. They have been floating in the warmth of fluid and felt secure while encapsulated in the womb. Exposure to the outside world full of loud and sudden sharp noises, smells, brightness, wearing of clothes, taste of milk and bodily functioning can be a massive adaptation for your baby to make. A secure, reassuring and comforting cuddle may be just the thing that helps them feel everything is ok.

Baby colic

- The term baby colic ^[8] is used when your baby is extremely unsettled, irritable and crying for long periods. Your baby may stiffen their back and not want to be held. All the usual comforting measures are not working and your baby is getting more desperate and so are you. This is a difficult time for parents. You feel useless and hope that you are not missing something serious. Talk to your health care professional for advice on colic treatments as there is emerging evidence about a role for certain probiotics in helping to reduce the crying associated with colic.

Release of accumulated stress

- Your baby's nervous system is immature and overstimulation through over-handling, overfeeding, loud noises, strong fragrances and excessive brightness can be overwhelming. If your baby is exposed to the sensations of the world gradually, it can help them adjust to their world more easily.

What you can do to cope with the demands of your crying baby:

- Have realistic expectations of your newborn during the first several weeks of life – your baby will cry and they will need you to be calm;
- Say yes to anyone that sincerely offers to help you;
- Build social networks with other like-minded parents who have young babies and children;
- Be realistic with what you expect to get accomplished each day;
- Slow down your pace of life, as this precious phase of nurturing your baby will not last for long;
- Eat regular nutritional foods and avoid eating too much processed foods and sugars;
- Rest each day, preferably each time your baby rests;
- Do some form of outdoor exercise every day;
- Allow yourself and your partner some alone time to do something you enjoy;
- If you are alone and your baby's crying is causing you to be extremely anxious or frustrated, put your baby safely in their cot or basket and leave the room until you are calmer. Call someone to help, if you are frightened you will hurt your baby. Staying with them when you feel overwhelmed could result in you reacting irrationally, bringing harm to your baby.

[Read more](#) ^[9]

Source URL: <https://www.babyandme.nestle.info/how-settle-crying-baby>

Links

[1] <https://www.babyandme.nestle.info/how-settle-crying-baby>

[2] [https://pinterest.com/pin/create/button/?url=https://www.babyandme.nestle.info/how-settle-crying-baby&media=https://www.babyandme.nestle.info/sites/default/files/styles/thumbnail/public/articles/crying-baby_1_0.jpg&description=How to settle a crying baby](https://pinterest.com/pin/create/button/?url=https://www.babyandme.nestle.info/how-settle-crying-baby&media=https://www.babyandme.nestle.info/sites/default/files/styles/thumbnail/public/articles/crying-baby_1_0.jpg&description=How%20to%20settle%20a%20crying%20baby)

[3]

<https://twitter.com/share?text=How%20to%20settle%20a%20crying%20baby&url=https%3A//www.babyandme.nestle.info/h>

settle-crying-baby

[4] <https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https://www.babyandme.nestle.info/how-settle-crying-baby>

[5] <https://api.whatsapp.com/send?text=https://www.babyandme.nestle.info/how-settle-crying-baby&title=How to settle a crying baby>

[6] <https://www.babyandme.nestle.info/printpdf/5841>

[7] <https://www.nestlebaby.com.au/baby-care/baby-health-essentials/baby-sleep/>

[8] <https://www.nestlebaby.com.au/baby-care/baby-health-concerns/colic/>

[9] <https://www.babyandme.nestle.info/javascript%3A%3B>