

Sound Therapy for Crying Babies

Crying is the most effective way a baby has of communicating its needs!

Introduction

Why do babies cry? Most babies cry quite a lot and for a variety of reasons. Crying is normal. Crying is the only way babies can let you know that something is upsetting them and that they need you. When babies cry they might be hungry, thirsty, too hot, too cold, off color, gas pains (colic), over-tired or uncomfortable. They may have been startled and just need to be held close and cuddled for a while. There are some babies who cry a lot from the time they are born. They pull up their legs, clench their fists, go red in the face and become very distressed.

The problem is usually worse in the afternoons and evenings. Other babies may develop severe bouts or attacks of crying when they are a few weeks old. After six to eight weeks these bouts of crying usually become less intense and most babies become more settled at about four to five months old. However, some babies continue to cry for longer than that. Some babies find it hard to settle into a routine, while others can not get themselves off to sleep very easily. Some babies need to be left in a quiet, dark room, while others want to be held, massaged and stroked. Some like silence while others prefer some quiet music. A regular routine of bath, feed and song seems to be most successful.

Tears Before Bedtime...and After Too!

The first few months with your new baby are a learning curve - even if the baby is not your first. It takes time to tune in to the newest member of your family, and learning your baby's cries will be part of this process.

Quick Facts:

Your baby will cry. It is his/her main language for communicating the baby needs at first.

It is never spoiling to attend to your baby's needs.

All parents need a break from excessive crying, or it can become unbearable.

Some babies find it hard to settle into a routine, while others cannot get to sleep very easily. It takes the average baby about 12 weeks for brainwave patterns to develop a regular routine.

Reasons for Crying in Newborn and Young Babies

Crying is the only means of communication for young babies. A normal healthy baby cries between one and three hours a day. Parents will start to notice and pick out different types of crying in their baby by the time the baby is ten to 14 days old. Parents will discover there are usually distinct sounds for reasons for crying. For instance, a hungry cry is short and low-pitched, an angry cry sounds angry, a cry of pain comes on suddenly with a long high-pitched shriek, followed by a long pause and then a flat wail; then a half awake whimper may indicate your baby is dreaming and will return to dreamland. Other than physical needs such as hunger, tiredness, a wet nappy, being too hot or too cold or even discomfort from tight clothing there are two real possibilities for younger babies to cry; these are colic and a nappy rash.

What Is Colic?

20–30 percent of healthy babies are said to have colic, a term used for fierce crying or screaming for hours at a time with no apparent cause. These babies tend to pull up their legs, bunch up their fists, and grimace during episodes of colic, which often start in late afternoon and may continue into the evening. Colic typically starts before 6 weeks of age and lets up when the baby is around three months old—the same time frame when non-colicky babies do the most crying.

Many theories about the cause of colic have been suggested, but none has been definitely identified. J. Marc Rhoads, MD, the director of pediatric gastroenterology at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston researched colic, a condition that is punctuated by excessive crying in young infants—and excessive exhaustion in their parents. According to Rhoads, colic is one of the most common gastrointestinal disturbances in newborns. As many as 30 percent of infants between the ages of two weeks and two months experience colic, and up to ten

percent have symptoms so severe that parents seek out medical attention.

Colic's cause is unknown, but its symptoms, as any parent with a colicky baby can attest, are palpable and relentless. A baby with colic may cry more than three hours a day, more than three days per week and for more than three weeks. No amount of parental comforting seems to help, and babies may cry so hard that they have difficulty breathing or swallowing.

Rhoades believes that colic could be the result of a bacterial imbalance that causes excess hydrogen in the large intestine. Babies with colic tend to have higher levels of breath hydrogen than babies who aren't as fussy, Rhoads says. They also have abnormal bacterial DNA patterns in stool samples, according to preliminary tests conducted by Mike Ferris, PhD, a colleague at New Orleans Children's Hospital.

Another theory of why babies have colic is that the intestines of the baby are going into spasm in response to too much gas or as a reaction to something in the formula or breast milk that they are being fed. These muscle spasms are very painful, thus the baby cries and cries for long periods of time, and it is difficult for the parents to figure out why their baby is crying. Babies on formula may be reacting to the cow's milk present in it. Cow's milk is a very common food allergen/reaction in children. Cow's milk has been associated with an increased frequency of ear infections in children that are sensitive to it. Try switching to a soy-based formula, a pre-digested formula or a hypo-allergenic formula.

The cause of colic is uncertain. Following is a list of methods to use to try soothing your baby:

- Rocking
- Walking
- Frequent feeding
- Rubbing or massage
- Music
- A change of room or environment
- A drive in the car

It is not advisable to use medicines to give your baby relief without first consulting your doctor or health nurse. However, Tummycalm is proclaimed to be an excellent, natural product for easing newborn colic. How does it work? It contains a combination of herbs that have a long historical use for treating upset digestion. Several substances in these herbs relax muscle spasms, alleviate gas pains and help the digestive tract of the newborn return to a state of relaxation.

What Is Nappy Rash?

Nappy rash is a skin irritation that occurs on the skin of a baby in the nappy area. Various things can cause the irritation including: ammonia, which is found in urine and feces, alcohol, which is sometimes used in baby wipes, a change in diet i.e. from breast milk to formula, strong detergents/soap additives, which have been used to clean terry nappies. However, not all nappy conditions are nappy rash. Other conditions that can cause similar symptoms include heat rash, dermatitis (eczema) or thrush.

Symptoms of nappy rash vary from mild sore red spots to cracked or broken skin and even blisters. You may also be able to smell ammonia strongly on the nappy. Treatment of nappy rash is usually not too difficult, and the problem should clear up after a few days: change the nappy as soon as it is wet/dirty; let your baby play without a nappy as much as possible; so their bottom is exposed to the air; if you're using a barrier cream, stop using it as it could be causing the rash or preventing the rash from healing; avoid using plastic pants; keep your baby's bottom dry, but don't use talcum powder. If the rash lasts longer than three days, gets worse or shows signs of being infected, (inflammation, discharge or your baby develops a fever) ask your health visitor or doctor for advice.

Coping with a Crying

Baby A new baby that is frequently crying can be very stressful for the parents and caregivers. It is helpful to try not to become tense, as your baby will sense this and it may make things worse. If possible find someone who can take turns with you soothing the baby. Make sure that you rest when you get the chance. Put on some soothing music that you enjoy. Try to keep things in perspective and not to worry about things that are not getting done such as the laundry or the washing up. Remember that most colic disappears before your baby is three months old and nappy rash is usually easily treated, so relief is in sight.

If you are finding it difficult to cope, talk to your doctor or health nurse about getting local support and advice.

Older Babies

From the age of about three months, babies become more aware of their surroundings and much more communicative. By now you are likely to be able to recognize your baby's distinctive cries, for instance when he/she is hungry, tired, or needs changing. However, now your baby will cry from boredom, anxiety, frustration and teething. While identifying the cause of your baby's crying will again require a process of trial and error, the following may be of help:

Boredom

Make sure that your baby has a selection of interesting toys within reach. Spend time with your baby just talking or playing or reading from a storybook. Singing and music can also be fun.

Anxiety

Your baby may cry if he/she fears separation from you or in the presence of strangers or if he/she is in a strange place. Always be supportive and never make fun of your child's fears. Reassure your baby with soothing words in a gentle tone of voice and cuddle him. When you are separated from your baby reassure him or her that you will come back soon. Whenever possible, try to make frequent appearances to reassure your baby that you are nearby.

If you have to be away from him or her for longer periods (for example with a child caregiver when you return to work) then take time to make sure that your baby is used to the new environment and the new caregiver. If possible, try to prepare your baby for your being apart by starting with short periods at a time and gradually making them longer. Make sure that you and the caregiver are patient with your baby's anxiety and don't show any frustration or impatience. If he/she has a comfort object, such as a toy or blanket, make sure that he/she has it when you leave. When you return give your baby extra cuddles and plenty of soothing talk. Make sure that you and the caregiver are patient with your baby's anxiety and don't show any frustration or impatience. When you return give your baby extra cuddles and plenty of soothing talk.

Frustration

Your baby will cry when they want to do things that they are not yet able to or when they do not get their own way. Make your home as childproof as possible to allow your baby to explore in safety without you having to fuss around with moving things out of the way. Attempt to have a favorite or new toy or game to hand to distract your baby when he/she becomes frustrated. Offer help when he/she needs it but do not completely take over, this allows your baby to feel a sense of achievement.

If your baby simply wants his or her own way it is important to decide for yourself whether the issue is an important one. A good rule of thumb is only to assert your own will over those things that are really important and not simply because you prefer things a certain way. When you do decide to assert your will then don't change your mind; this will confuse your baby and make him or her less likely to do as you wish next time. Provided the baby is safe then tantrums are best ignored when possible.

Rather than shouting or punishing your baby explain in a reasoned way why he/she cannot do whatever it is they want to do. Although he/she will not understand what you say at first, your baby will understand your tone of voice and will learn what you mean.

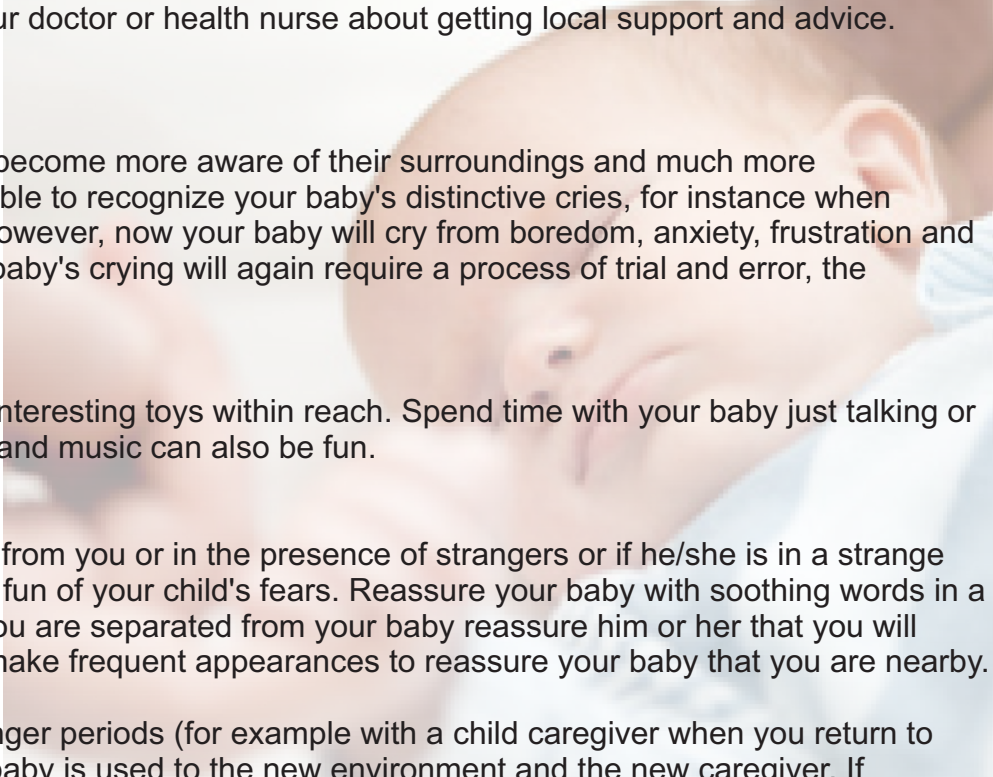
Teething

When the teeth are coming through the gums become swollen and red. Your baby may also tug on their ear or even develop cold symptoms whilst teething. Your baby may dribble a lot, be irritable, clingy and have trouble sleeping. Medical treatment is not usually necessary. Try giving him or her something to chew on such as a cold carrot or a chilled (not frozen) teething toy. You can also try rubbing your baby's gums with your finger or applying a small amount teething gel.

Illness or Infection

Crying accompanying symptoms such as: fever, loss of appetite, vomiting, skin rash, light-phobia, is more likely to be the result of an infection. If your baby has these symptoms or if you think your baby is not well, contact the doctor or health nurse as symptoms can progress quickly with small babies.

Excessive Crying



Some babies simply do cry more than others. Reasons why may include:

Temperament – Each baby is different. Some will be more 'fussy' than others and may seem to cry more, often right from birth, and with no obvious explanation.

Jumpy Baby – Some babies may strongly protest about being too hot or too cold or won't like being bathed or dressed. They may be very sensitive to touch or to changes.

Difficult Birth – For example, babies who were born prematurely, or those who have had to be in special care.

Environmental Change – Some babies can be more sensitive to changes in their surroundings or care routine.

New Developmental Stage – Babies often cry more just before they take some big steps in learning or growth.

Tension – Some baby's sense when their parents are tense and it can affect their behavior. This can be a bit confusing; are you feeling tense because your baby cries a lot, or is the baby crying a lot because you're tense

Colic – Colic is also a reason of excessive crying.

And if all else fails? Your baby may be sick. A doctor should be notified if a baby who has been diagnosed with colic:

Develops a rectal fever higher than 101°F (38.3°C)

Cries for more than four hours

Vomits

Has diarrhea or stools that are black or bloody

Loses weight

Eats less than normal

Comforting Your Baby

Offer Your Baby a Feed – Whether at your breast, a bottle, baby's own fingers, thumb or a dummy, sucking is always comforting.

Carry your baby close – Snuggle him close to you in a baby carrier or sling.

Massage – Gentle stroking and massage of all kinds can help calm your baby. But don't massage his tummy before he's four weeks old. You'll enjoy the feeling of gently massaging your baby, but miss out his spine and avoid nut-based oils such as almond oil.

Music – Soft rhythmic sounds or music can help comfort newborns. Even the droning sound made by a washing machine, fan or vacuum cleaner can help soothe some babies.

Fresh Air – Get out and about with your baby, and even if the crying doesn't stop, it will not seem quite so bad outdoors.

Wind – Some babies feel better after they've had a chance to bring up some wind. One way to do this is to place your baby in an upright position against your shoulder and pat his back gently.

Bath – Some parents swear by giving their baby a warm bath. It can instantly calm some babies, but be aware that it can also have the opposite effect. You know your baby best.

Quiet Time – After a feed, put your baby down for some quiet time. Be aware he may cry for a few minutes before going off to sleep. Most babies settle when taken for a walk in the pram, and the exercise helps parents feel better too.

Drive – Some babies only seem to settle when taken for a drive. This is not ideal, but if you are able to do this might be useful for the few weeks before he grows past this stage.

Whispering – To babies will sometimes get their attention and stop them crying.

Crying babies tend to arch their heads back and stiffen their legs. Holding them curved into a C or flexed position can help them calm down. Here are some different ways of holding your baby that may help.

Crying in Older Babies – 3 to 12 months

Babies start to cry less after about three months, but some who did not cry much until now do so more at about eight to nine months. A whining type of cry often begins in older babies. Some reasons for crying in older babies include:

Anxiety – Especially after about seven to eight months, some babies get worried when you are out of sight. They may get more and more worried about being apart from you.

Wanting Company – Crying because he wants you to come, and acting pleased when you do. This isn't naughty or manipulative - your baby may cry to let you know that he needs company.

Teething – Not everyone agrees that babies cry because they are teething - but many parents are convinced it causes some crying.

Having New Fears – Your baby can start to feel afraid for no clear reason, for example, the sound of the vacuum cleaner or particular animals or even having a bath.

Loss of a Comforter – When your baby becomes attached to something, he finds soothing; perhaps a dummy or special toy.

Knocks and Bumps – obviously more common once your baby gets mobile.

Night Crying

By the time your baby is three months old he may be waking only once in the night. By twelve months about one in every three babies still wakes up at night-time. Night-time crying can be the hardest for parents to bear as you may be tired yourself.

Coping With Your Own Feelings It is hard to always be patient with your baby, especially if there is a lot of crying. Parents may find your-selves with feelings of frustration, anger, helplessness and distress. These feelings are real and cannot just be ignored. Just because you love your baby does not mean you have to like his/her behavior all the time. Remind yourself that your baby cannot control the crying and is not trying to get at you. The baby is not “spoilt” and attending to him/her will not spoil her. If there is someone nearby to help, give him or her baby while you take a break.

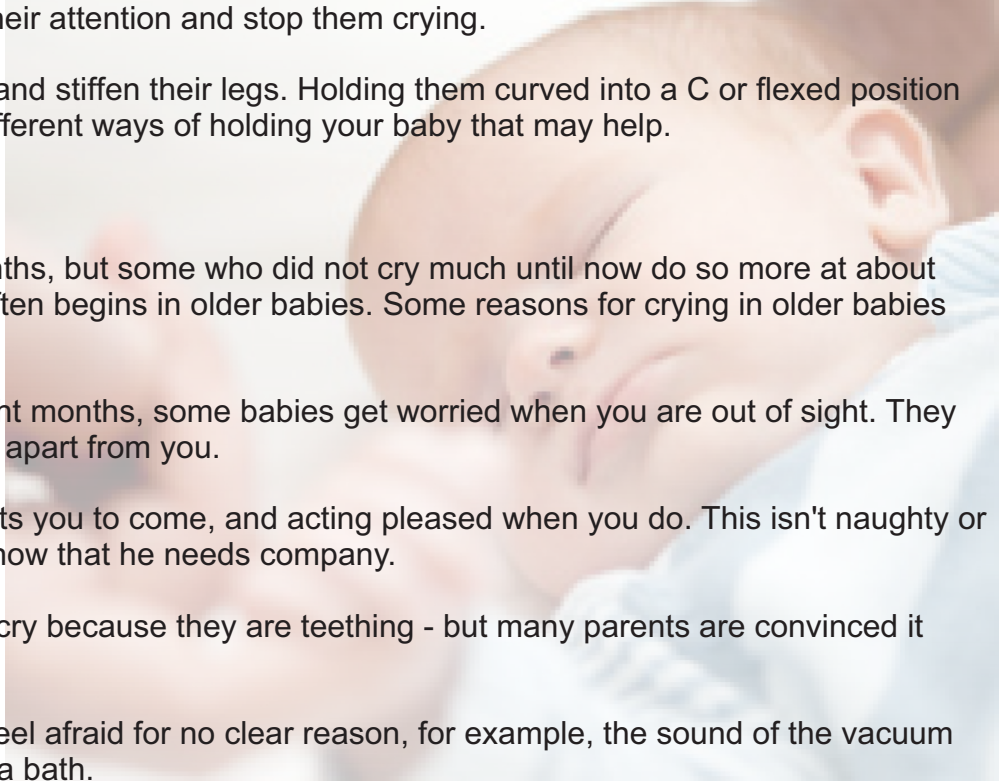
If you are on your own, you may need to take a break anyway when you feel angry feelings building up. Put your baby down in a safe place and walk away. Go outside perhaps, and take some deep breaths, phone someone or make a cup of tea. Put on quiet music to distract yourself. When you feel calmer, go back to your baby and try to settle her again. It is important to look after yourself when you have a young baby who depends on you.

Conclusion

In conclusion parents generally receive a lot of advice when baby first arrives in the home. It can be confusing listening to it all and you may wonder what to do. The best advice to take is what feels right for you. Some babies do cry a lot and seem hard to comfort. It is important for parents to take care of themselves when there is a new baby in the home that is depending on you.

Take up offers of help and get some regular breaks when you can. Soft music or sound can help comfort newborns; help parents relax, and decrease tension. Try to deliberately relax your muscles; your baby will be calmed by the relaxation in your muscles even if you are still feeling quite stressed. Your baby will not cry forever. Generally, as your baby gets older he/she will get more interested in the surroundings and cry less.

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