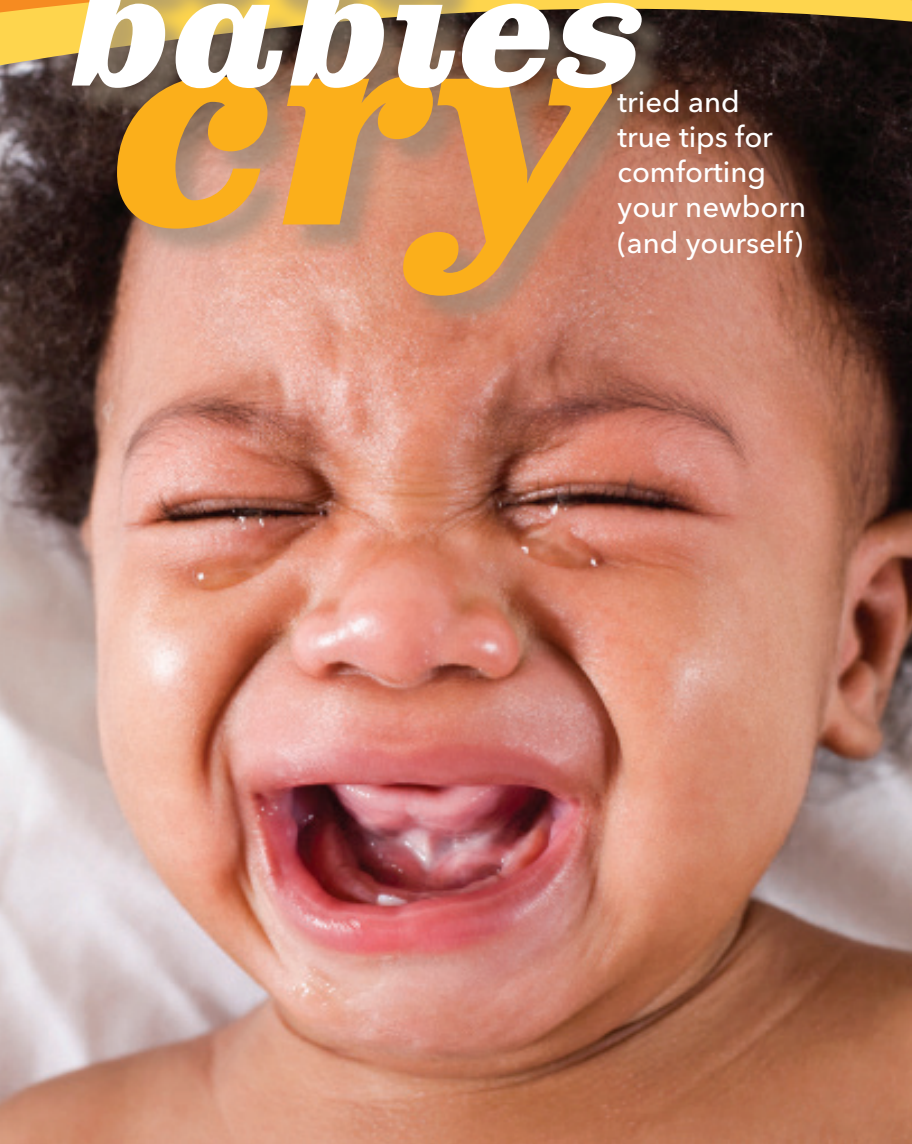




children's  
trust

# *all babies cry*

tried and  
true tips for  
comforting  
your newborn  
(and yourself)



# table of contents

## **chapter 1: what's normal about crying? (8 minutes)**

If you have ever wondered, "Is my baby's crying normal?" then this chapter is for you! It covers the crying behavior among infants up to 6 months old.

## **chapter 2: comforting your baby (20 minutes)**

While every baby is different, there are many tried and true ways to comfort a fussy baby. Learn from new parents what has worked with their crying babies and then see which ones your baby likes. Be sure to share this chapter with anyone who takes care of your baby!

## **chapter 3: self-care tips for parents (18 minutes)**

Taking the best care of your baby means also taking care of yourself. This chapter offers tons of tips for new parents on such things as getting the sleep and nutrition you need, where to go (and how to ask) for support, keeping tabs on stress, and finding ways to reduce it. Babies are not the only ones getting used to a new life – you are too!

## **chapter 4: colic and how to cope (9 minutes)**

Some babies cry more than others. If you think your baby is extra fussy or may have colic, this chapter will let you know how other parents coped with intense crying over a long period of time.

## **new parent resources**

The back of this book includes resources for new parents, such as websites, hot-lines, and books.

# introduction

“All Babies Cry” helps you know what to do when your baby cries. We have drawn from decades of research on infant behavior and brain development related to crying. We have also talked with doctors, midwives, and new parents like you to learn what kind of comforting works and what does not. Over time, you will get to know your baby and figure out what works best for both of you.

We have organized the video (and this booklet) into chapters to make it easier to fit into new parents’ busy schedules. You can watch a chapter at a time - on your computer or your phone.

*All Babies Cry is a Children’s Trust program supported with funding from Massachusetts General Hospital. Content was originally developed by educators at Vida Health Communications, Inc with support and funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the NIH.*

Visit [childrenstrustma.org](http://childrenstrustma.org) for more information.

Go to **allbabiescry .com** or  
download the mobile app.

# chapter 1

## what's normal about crying?

As hard as it may be to listen to sometimes, crying is something your baby is supposed to do! It is her way of saying, "Something is not right. Care is needed, please!"

## why do babies cry?

Hunger is the most common reason babies cry, but certainly not the only reason. Usually, if a newborn has been fed and burped within the last hour and a half, chances are she needs something else. Maybe she wants to be held, maybe she is cold, or maybe she just needs to be reminded that you are there for her.

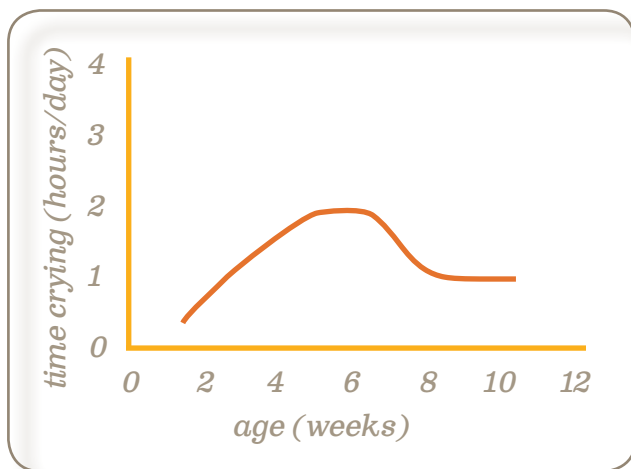
You may think that as a parent you are somehow supposed to magically know what each cry means. You won't. No parent does. At least, not at first. As you and your baby get to know each other, you will learn to read her cues and her cries. Child development experts agree: *you cannot spoil your newborn by responding to her cries.*

There may be times when you feel like your new baby is trying to control you with her crying. However, scientists now know that it is not until later in the first year of life when babies learn that they have the power to get you to behave in certain ways. For babies six months or younger, your quick and loving response - as much as food - is a comfort to her if she is upset.

## how much do babies cry?

While all babies cry, the amount depends on the baby. It is common for babies to cry on average for a total of one hour over the course of a day during the first few weeks. This may increase to as much as two hours total a day when the baby is six weeks old. Then, after about eight weeks or so, that amount may go back down to about an hour a day total.

## common crying pattern for newborns:



Remember, these are averages. That means that some babies cry more than this, some cry less. Babies who are held several hours a day, cry less overall. If your baby cries a lot more than the average, he could have colic. Check out **chapter 4: colic and how to cope** to learn more.

Of course, five minutes of crying can feel like an hour if you have only had a couple hours of sleep! Use a **crying diary** to track how much your baby is really crying. It may be less than it seems.

You will soon learn that there are lots and lots of ways to calm a crying baby. Check out **chapter 2: comforting your baby** for ideas.

## tired time

Late afternoons are common times for babies to get fussy and cry a lot. As they grow, babies spend more and more time awake and so, by the afternoon, they can get cranky. The same thing can happen with parents, too! Try putting your baby down for naps at the same time every day. And take a nap yourself then, too. Keep the lights low and sounds quiet as evening approaches.

## crying diary

sample 1	sample 2
2:00 am sleep 2hrs	1:30 am - sleep 3 hrs
4:10 am - cry 2min	4:30 am - eat
4:20 am - eat	5:30 am - sleep 2 hrs
5:00 am - sleep 1 hr	7:30 am - cry 4 min
6:00 am - cry 9 min	7:45 am - eat
6:10 am - eat	9:30 am - sleep 1.5 hrs
8:00 am - eat	11:05 am - cry 8 mins
8:40 am - sleep 1.5 hrs	11:15 am - eat
10:15 am - cry 11 min	12:30 pm - cry 5 mins
10:30 am - eat	1:00 pm - sleep 1 hr
11:10 am -sleep 1h 50m	2:05 pm - cry 2 mins
1:00 pm - eat	2:10 pm - eat
1:30 pm - cry 4 min	2:40 pm - cry 22 mins
3:00 pm - eat	3:30 pm -sleep 1 hr
3:30 pm - cry 18 min	4:30 pm - cry 14 mins
4:00 pm - sleep 1h 10m	4:45 pm - eat
5:10 pm - cry 2 min	5:30 pm - sleep 1.5 hrs
5:15 pm - eat	7:00 pm - eat
5:40 pm - sleep 1.5 hrs	8:30 pm - sleep 45 mins
7:00 pm - eat	9:30 pm - cry 11 mins
7:30 pm - sleep 2.5 hrs	10:00 pm - eat
10:00 pm - cry 4 min	10:45 pm - sleep 2.5 hrs
10:05 pm - eat	
11:00 pm - sleep 1.5 hrs	
sleeping: 13 hrs	sleeping: 13 hrs, 15 mins
crying: 50 minutes	crying: 66 minutes

## crying diary

Track your baby's crying for one week. Note when sleeping and feedings happen too. This diary can help you notice crying patterns. Add up the total number of minutes each day that your baby cries and share this with your baby's health care provider. We recommend waiting until your baby is at least 4 weeks old before you start tracking crying time because that is when patterns begin to become clear.

For each day of the week, put down the time that your baby sleeps, eats, or cries. For sleeping and crying, you might keep track of how many minutes or hours she does each. Add up the total at the end of the day. See the previous page for a sample.

- Do you see any patterns in your baby's sleeping, crying, and eating habits?
- Do crying periods happen before or after feedings?
- Are late afternoons common crying periods?
- When do the worst episodes occur?

Share this info, along with total sleeping and crying amounts with your baby's health care provider. Charting how much your baby cries can be helpful if you think she may have colic.

The important thing to remember is that the crying patterns of all babies change over time. They often get worse before they get better, but they will get better!

You will soon learn that there are lots and lots of ways to calm a crying baby. Check out *DVD Chapter 2: Comforting Your Baby* for ideas.

**crying diary**

[illegible]





# chapter 2

## comforting your baby

There is no one right way to comfort a crying baby, but there are lots of different strategies that work. Consider them all tools in your toolbox. When one does not work, try the next one!

Ask your parents or grandparents what soothing techniques they used with you. The same ones may comfort your baby. With time and practice, you will find what works best for you and your baby. Just keep trying!

## swaddling

Swaddling is another word for snuggly wrapping your baby – kind of like a burrito! While it may seem strange to us, babies really like being wrapped up so that it's hard for them to move their arms or legs. When they were in the womb, they did not have much wiggle room. So being swaddled feels like home to them.

## this is how to swaddle your baby:

1. Spread out a large blanket on a surface (blankets that have a little stretch are good for swaddling).
2. Turn down the top corner of the blanket to make a triangle.
3. Lay your baby so his head is just above the fold.



4. Hold one arm at his side and bring the blanket flap on that side of his body across his chest.
5. Tuck the flap behind his back, between his torso and other arm.



6. Take the bottom triangle and bring it up to your baby's chest.

7. Pull up the remaining flap snugly across his chest to secure the other arm, and wrap it behind him as far as it will go.





### **tummy time rocks**

Time on her tummy is good for your baby's physical and overall development. Once she is about a month old, and has some head control, try tummy time. When she is awake, and you are in the same room, put your baby on a blanket on the floor face down. In time, you may see her use her arms to help lift her torso and head. This is something babies need to learn to do before they start crawling. Tummy time can also be good for your baby's digestion. The firm pressure on her stomach may help relieve gas pains and she gets to see the world from a different viewpoint!

*note: If your baby starts to fall asleep on her tummy, gently move her to her back. Babies should always sleep on their back. Remember the phrase: "Back to sleep."*

### **pacifiers are safe**

"For babies younger than two years old, pacifiers are okay and will not hurt their future teeth. In fact, pacifiers can be a source of comfort to babies." - American Dental Association

Breastfeeding experts recommend that you wait until four weeks of age before trying a pacifier so your baby only needs to get used to one nipple.



### **sing aloud**

You might think you have an awful singing voice, but your baby doesn't care. He has nobody to compare you to. It will never matter to him if you can carry a tune and he will be comforted by your voice simply because it is yours. So sing proud!

### **neck support is key**

No matter what motion you try, be sure that you support your baby's neck and head well. Especially in the first four months, a baby's head is very large compared to her body, and her neck muscles are not strong enough to support the weight of her head.

Even after four months, always make sure to support your baby's head and neck when you are lifting, carrying, bouncing, rocking, swinging, or dancing.

## **try a combination of soothing strategies**

For many babies, using a combination of several comfort strategies all at once is what soothes them best. For example, you might swaddle your baby, change her position (try laying her on her side, across your forearm), give her a pacifier, gently bounce her, and then make shushing sounds. For centuries, parents and grandparents have learned to be creative in order to discover what soothes their baby best. Many parents find that trying a little bit of everything is the best way to go.

## **keep trying**

You may find that some comfort strategies work like a charm right away, and others not at all. Babies grow quickly, and their preferences change as they grow. What doesn't work today may well work tomorrow.

## **what does not work to calm a baby?**

- Never feed your baby anything other than breast milk or formula until your health care provider says so. Many old wives' tales say to give babies solid food or even alcohol to help them settle down or sleep. This is absolutely not true and can cause harm to your baby. A newborns digestive system is not able to handle anything but breast milk or formula.
- Never hit, shake, or yell at your baby. Shaking or hitting a baby can cause permanent brain damage or death. It can keep your baby's trust in you from growing. What's more, it usually makes crying even worse.

## **abusive head trauma or “shaken baby syndrome”**

A dangerous form of child abuse happens when a baby is shaken. Such shaking usually takes place when a baby has been crying for a long time and a frustrated caregiver loses control. Many times the caregiver did not intend to harm the baby. Still, it is a form of child abuse.

Abusive Head Trauma can occur from as little as 5 seconds of shaking during which an infant’s still-developing brain bounces back and forth against the skull. This can cause bruising, swelling, pressure, and bleeding in the brain. It might also lead to permanent brain damage or death.

## **never shake your baby**

If you are angry or very upset, put your baby safely in her crib and walk away. Babies can sense our stress and often it makes them more fussy. Take a break from the sound of the crying. Then, come back and check on her every few minutes. You will both be better off if you take a break instead. And remember: all new parents need help now and then. Don’t hesitate to ask when you do.

## **share what you know with others who care for your baby**

Fill out the worksheet, *When My Baby Cries...Try This!* Tear it out, and post it on the fridge or make a copy to give to other caregivers. They will be happy to know what calming strategies work with your baby without having to guess. And be sure to show them the “*All Babies Cry*” DVD, too.

## when my baby cries...try this!

Here are some tips that I found work to calm my baby.

positions my baby likes:

- lying on his side across my forearm
- over-the-shoulder
- cradled in my arms on his back
- in my arms on his tummy
- on my knees on his tummy
- on the floor on a blanket on his tummy

### *blanket is good for swaddling*

things my baby likes to suck on:

- her finger/hand
- pacifier
- my finger

movement my baby likes:

- rocking
- swaying
- gliding (in a swing or hammock)
- swinging
- dancing
- gentle bouncing on an exercise ball
- walking while in a sling
- stroller or car rides



touch my baby likes:

- massages
- belly rubs
- back rubs

sounds my baby likes:

- music
- recorded sounds
- lullabies
- reading/talking
- appliance

ways to distract my baby:

- jangling keys
- mobile
- toy
- peek-a-boo
- looking out the window
- looking in the mirror

# chapter 3

## self-care tips for parents

Parenting can be one of the hardest (and most rewarding) jobs you will ever have. You are learning “on the job” and are getting a lot less sleep than you are used to. There may be days when you love every minute, and you may also have days when you wish your baby came with a mute button and volume control.

## remember the 5 steps of self-care

*step 1. remind yourself that uncomfortable feelings when caring for a crying baby are normal*

## it is normal to have bad days

If your baby has been crying nonstop for a long time, you may have thoughts that scare you or make you feel helpless or anxious. You may even question if you are a good parent. It might feel awful, but you would be amazed how many experienced parents will tell you they have felt exactly the same way.

But, there is a big difference between having scary thoughts (which is common) and acting on those thoughts (which is not okay). Thinking “I just want to run away from home today” and actually packing a suitcase are two different things. Remember the difference between thinking and doing and let yourself off the hook for occasional thoughts that worry you.



### **when should you be concerned about feeling bad?**

If your bad days outnumber the good ones or if they affect your ability to get out of bed or take care of your baby, this could be a sign of depression. If you are ever worried that you might act on “scary thoughts” or afraid you might hurt your baby, it is important to talk to your doctor right away.

*One out of five women has postpartum blues or depression. Dads can get the blues, too!*

### **talk with your doctor if you have any of the following:**

- feeling agitated or moody
- less interest in food or lowered appetite
- constant anxiety or worry about the baby
- frequently unable to sleep when you have the chance
- difficulty concentrating or thinking
- feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- feeling withdrawn, socially isolated, or unconnected
- no pleasure or interest in all or most activities
- less energy
- negative feelings toward the baby
- thoughts of death or suicide
- trouble sleeping

### *step 2. when you need to, put some distance between you and the sound of crying*

All jobs come with coffee breaks. Parenting should too. So put the baby in her crib and take a few minutes for yourself - you will feel better for it. Some ways to get relief:

- use foam earplugs or headphones (they will help reduce the sound of the crying but you can still hear your baby)
- lower the volume of the baby monitor
- listen to music you love
- make yourself a cup of tea
- go into another room for a few minutes
- do some deep breathing exercises
- put the baby in a front pack or stroller and go for a walk
- if there is someone else around you trust, hand off the baby for a little while

### **different parenting styles**

Sometimes partners have different parenting styles, and that is okay! In fact, those differences help your baby learn how to handle new situations and people. You and your partner may deal with the baby's crying in your own ways. It may bother one of you more. One of you may need more frequent breaks. That is also okay.

Work at accepting each other's limits and differences. No way is the "right way" or the "wrong way." Remember to trade off. Just because one of you is good at rocking the baby to sleep or singing a lullaby should not mean that it is always your job to calm the crying baby. Try not to let one of you become more of an "expert" on your baby. You are both learning as you go.

### *step 3. identify signs that you are becoming stressed*

We all have limits on our ability to handle change and stress. When you are new to parenting, you may find that you get upset or stressed out more easily than before - probably because you have not had enough sleep or time for yourself. It is important to know when you are reaching your limit so you can take care of yourself. So, learn to notice your personal signs of stress. They might include:

- clenched teeth
- sweating
- heart racing
- faster breathing
- pacing or walking back and forth
- repeating movements
- swearing
- moving faster in general
- being accident prone
- having changes in your eating habits
- upsetting or disturbing thoughts

These behaviors can be signs from our bodies telling us we are stressed and need to step back. When you notice any of these happening to you, take a break. If you are caring for your baby alone, it is perfectly okay to spend a few minutes by yourself in another room, away from the sound of crying.

#### *step 4. figure out what you can do to reduce stress and soothe yourself*

Taking care of yourself is one of the most important things you can do to take care of your baby. If you make time to sleep, eat, see friends and family, and get a break, you will feel better and your baby will notice. So take care of you: it's worth the effort.

- Make getting sleep a priority. Getting as much sleep as possible is the single most important thing new parents can do for themselves. Nap whenever your baby naps.
- Remember to eat well. Eat plenty of fruits and veggies, whole grains and protein. They will give you the energy you need.
- Find time for exercise. You do not have to go to the gym to exercise. Floor exercises, yoga, stretches, dancing, aerobics, and even running in place are easy to do at home. Going for a walk is also a great way to beat stress and get some fresh air.
- Let go around the house and limit guests for a while. Having a tidy house may make you feel a little more in control of things. But it may not be worth the added stress. Your baby will never know if the house is messy! But she will know if you are stressed out. So, if you can, let go of the house and enjoy your time with your baby instead.

#### **prepare for times when your baby cries a lot**

- I know I have hit my limit when I \_\_\_\_\_
- I will reduce my stress by \_\_\_\_\_
- When I need a break, I'm going to call \_\_\_\_\_

### *step 5. get the help you need*

#### **take time off**

If you have a partner, work together and take turns doing baby care and house chores. Ask friends for recommendations for a good babysitter - you will be glad for a break and your baby will get the benefit of being with someone new. Single parents especially need breaks! Identify a network of support for yourself so you can have some time to yourself as often as you can.

#### **practice asking for help**

For many people, asking for help is hard to do. But ALL new parents need support and most don't ask nearly enough for an extra hand. Keep a running list of things you need help with. Be direct and specific when you make requests. Asking for help from family and friends actually makes them feel truly useful.

here's a running list of "to dos":

- shop for groceries
- clean the laundry
- drop off/pick up clothes for dry cleaning
- babysit while I sleep
- babysit while I run errands/socialize/work
- take an older child to daycare or school
- bring a meal over (home-cooked or take out)
- clean the bathroom/kitchen
- do the dishes
- take the car in for a tune up/inspection
- help with yard work

## don't go it alone

Make sure you have someone to talk to on days when the stress that can come with crying feels like too much. It could be a friend, sibling, parent, or neighbor. Maybe that person can come over and give you a hand. Maybe you can just talk to them on the phone when you need it. You can also develop a "code word" or phrase (even something silly like "peanut butter sandwiches") that can be your way of telling this person that you need them to come over, no questions asked.

Practice reaching out to friends and family. Join a new parents group - either in person or online. Share your joys AND frustrations with people who care about you or who are going through the same experience as you. Talking to other people who know what it is like to be a new parent can help you not feel so alone.

Check the resources at the end of the booklet. Or ask your health care provider for referrals to new parent groups, or search online for local meet-ups and parent groups close to you. During your baby's first two weeks, if you have concerns about crying, call the newborn nursery at the hospital where your baby was born for expert advice from staff nurses.



## you may need extra special care if

Some situations are just naturally more stressful. Put extra support in place early and often if you:

- have a baby who was born prematurely
- are parenting alone
- are a teen parent
- are taking care of other children while caring for a newborn
- have a change in your living situation (such as a move, job change, financial stress, etc.)
- use drugs or alcohol
- have a history of depression or anxiety
- have a physical illness (either you or the baby)
- have relationship struggles
- have a history of family violence
- have an especially fussy or colicky baby

## when other people care for your baby

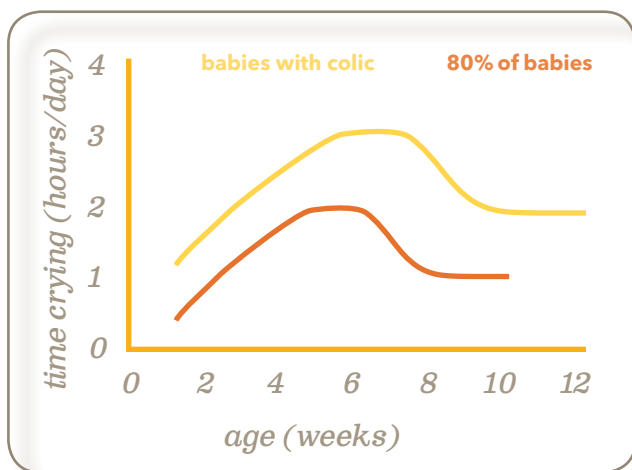
Your baby's crying will not bother other people the way it bothers you. Outsiders can take it a lot longer than you can. They know they will be able to go home after babysitting. Make it easier on them by sharing the When My Baby Cries, Try This worksheet - so they learn what works with your baby. Also encourage them to watch *DVD Chapter 2: Comforting Your Baby for ideas*.

# chapter 4

## colic and how to cope

Basically, colic is infant crying for long periods each day for what seems like no reason.

“Colicky” is a word used to describe babies who - just at the time most babies start to settle down and cry less - instead cry a lot more than average and have difficulty being comforted no matter what strategies parents try.



Parents of babies with colic say their infants' cries sound more like screams. It sounds as if babies are in pain when in fact, they check out as perfectly healthy in the clinic.

## **does colic mean she will be a cranky toddler?**

No! Babies with colic are just as likely to become happy, well-adjusted toddlers as babies without colic.

## **colic - an unsolved mystery**

We do not know exactly what causes colic. Some think it has to do with a baby's digestive system. Some think it is related to brain development. However, there is not a lot of good science on the causes of colic.

About one in every five babies has colic. It happens to both boys and girls equally. It does not matter if you breastfeed or bottle-feed. Neither causes colic.

Whatever the cause is, colic is due to a set of conditions inside your baby and is something he cannot control. As a parent, you too have no control over colic. Colic does go away eventually.

In time, the weeks and months of crying will all seem like a distant memory. The first six months together are an important time for you and your baby to develop a bond that is going to last a lifetime.

All of the care you provide and all of those sleepless nights will shape a strong foundation of love and trust.

## what can you do if I have a colicky baby?

First, talk to your baby's health care provider so that she can make sure nothing is medically wrong. She may also know of local new parents groups, which are especially helpful to parents of babies who cry a lot.

Second, remind yourself that your baby's colic is not your fault. Try to accept the situation in the most positive way you can. Mostly, this means letting your support network know that you are dealing with colic and that you are going to need extra support for a few months. It may also mean working hard to keep your sense of humor.

There is no denying: coping with colic is difficult. It can make any parent feel frustrated, afraid, anxious, disappointed in their baby – even angry. These negative feelings are normal. After all, this is not what you thought new parenthood would be like. So, while you are waiting for your baby to grow out of it, you need to take extra special care of yourself.

- Connect with others. Online chat rooms and in-person new parent groups often have members who are coping with colic. They are a source of great ideas and reassurance that things do get better in time.
- Take care of you, first. Remember those airplane safety demonstrations? They tell you “in the event of an emergency, place your own oxygen mask on before you put one on your child.” This is because you can only be helpful to your child if you are okay yourself. Do not forget to take care of yourself by eating well, sleeping, exercising, and getting some fresh air.
- Check out the self-care tips in Chapter 3. While these are good strategies for any new parent, they can be a lifeline for parents of colicky babies.
- Revisit Chapter 4 of the dvd to learn more from parents who dealt with colic. Their stories may help when you need to see light at the end of the tunnel.



## looking to the future

In time, the weeks and months of crying will all seem like a distant memory. The first six months together are an important time for you and your baby to develop a bond that is going to last a lifetime. All of the care you provide and all of those sleepless nights will shape a strong foundation of love and trust.

By easing your baby's transition into a whole new world, by comforting him when he cries, you will be teaching him to love and trust you. Your baby will know that with you, he will be safe, cared for, and always loved. All the comforting you give in your early months of parenting helps your baby feel secure. ***And that security will give him confidence in himself as he takes on his next challenge: being a toddler!***

# ***new parent resources***

## **web**

### **all babies cry - the children's trust**

Videos and resources for new and expecting parents.

[allbabiescry.com](http://allbabiescry.com)

[childrenstrustma.org](http://childrenstrustma.org)

### **one tough job**

Award-winning website with current, practical parenting information, tips, and support parents can trust.

[onetoughjob.org](http://onetoughjob.org)

### **american academy of pediatrics**

[healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org) (parenting website)

[aap.org](http://aap.org) (academy website)

## **phone**

### **parents helping parents**

(800) 632-8188 – 24 hours a day

[parentshelpingparents.org](http://parentshelpingparents.org)

### **postpartum support international**

(800) 944-4773 – 8:00am – 4:30pm (PST)

[postpartum.net](http://postpartum.net)

## **books**

### **your baby is speaking to you by Dr. Kevin Nugent**

A visual guide to the amazing behaviors of your newborn and growing baby. Available through Amazon.com and your local bookstore.

### **what to expect the first year by Heidi Eisenberg Murko, Arlene Eisenberg and Sandee Hathaway**

Available through amazon.com and your local bookstore.