

Tips for Parents of Young Children


Parenting.
Give it time.

Coping with a crying baby

All babies cry and sometimes it can be hard to cope with. Crying is the only way your baby can tell you what they need.

When your baby cries they are trying to tell you something. It may be hard to work out what your baby needs. With time, you'll get to know your baby, and what their different cries mean.

As your baby grows they'll learn other ways of communicating with you. For example, they'll get better at eye contact, making noises and smiling.



Your baby may cry when they are:

- **Hungry** – your baby may need to feed more often than you thought. If it has been an hour since the last feed your baby may be hungry.
- **Lonely** – your baby needs lots of cuddles and touch. They feel safe when they can see your face, hear your voice, smell you and feel your touch. Crying is their way of asking to be held.
- **Wet or dirty** – check to see if their nappy is wet or dirty.
- **Tired** – your baby may be tired but having trouble nodding off. Try gentle rocking in a dimly lit room.
- **Too hot or too cold** – newborn babies like to be kept warm, but not too warm. Generally you can dress your baby with one more layer than you have on.
- **Uncomfortable** – your baby may feel uncomfortable because of something scratchy like clothing tags or a zip.
- **Overstimulated** – your baby may have got too excited, especially if there have been lots of visitors or things going on. Try rocking your baby gently in a dimly lit room.
- **Unwell or have a fever** – if they have a high temperature, they may have an illness. If you think there's something wrong ring NHS Direct Wales for advice. You can call them on 0845 46 47.

Try to respond to your baby when they cry. They will learn that the world is safe, and will feel secure. A research study found that parents who responded to their crying baby, cried less than babies who were left to 'cry it out'.

Tips to soothe your baby

- If you're breastfeeding, let your baby suckle at your breast.
- If you're bottle feeding, consider offering your baby a dummy. Sterilise dummies as you do with bottles. Don't dip them in anything sweet and try to limit their use.
- Try stroking your baby's back rhythmically or wrap them in a blanket and rock them gently.
- Hold your baby close, smile at them, talk, sing or hum. Hold your baby where they will be able to see you easily.
- Give your baby a warm bath or try going for a walk or drive.
- Use soothing sounds, like 'white noise' (the noise a hairdryer or vacuum cleaner makes). These are available to download on free Apps.
- Skin to skin contact like baby massage can soothe your baby and you may find it relaxing, too! Your local Family Information Service will have information about classes in your area. You can contact them by telephone on 0300 123 7777.

Every baby is different. You might need to try several things before you find one that works for your baby.

Never shake your baby. This can damage their brain. Always support your baby's neck and head whenever you lift them or lay them down.

If it is getting too much for you, put your baby in a safe place and leave the room for a bit until you feel calmer. Or ask a friend or family member to care for your baby for a while so you can have time to yourself. You may also find it helpful to contact the Cry-sis (English language) helpline on 08451 228 669 (lines are open 9am to 10pm, 7 days a week).

If you are worried about your baby's crying, ask your health visitor or GP for advice. It might help to keep a record of how often and when your baby cries. Do they cry after every feed or during the evening? This can help your GP or health visitor work out if there is a particular reason for the crying.

For more helpful tips on coping with a crying baby and on positive parenting techniques, visit: gov.wales/giveittime