



Why do babies cry?

Key points	Theories of Unexplained Crying:
<p>Crying is the main way babies communicate, they express their needs and caregivers' attentions are captured. Over time, and with paying attention, parents will recognize their baby's different cries.</p> <p>Crying is an automatic reaction, newborns cry by reflex. Babies sense a need, which causes a sudden inspiration of air, then forceful expelling of air through the vocal cords.</p>	<p><i>Infants may cry for many reasons – non-medical and medical:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Boredom or loneliness 2) Discomfort or irritation from a wet or dirty diaper - Stool is very irritating to the skin. If not cleaned off, it can cause pain and burning. 3) Feeling hot/cold - Overheated or too cold, also clothing that is too tight. . 4) Hunger or thirst - Hunger is one of the most common reasons babies cry, and once feeding begins the crying stops. This is especially true when babies are new-borns or are younger, as the stomach volume is small and empties quickly. 5) Moro reflex - Normal muscle jerks and twitches that disturb the sleep 6) Worried/Fear – Stranger anxiety 7) Overstimulated/ tired - They need sleep and need their parent to put them in a comfortable position. 8) Colic – see more below 9) Teething – baby's gums may be swollen and painful 10) Pain - Examples include earache, mouth ulcers, or diaper rash. An ulcer on tip of penis may also cause pain and crying. Babies experiencing pain are not happy when they are not crying and tend to cry a lot. 11) Infection/ Illness

Colic

What is it exactly?
<p>Colic is described as sudden, unprovoked and excessive crying Occurring 3 or more hours/day, minimum of 3 days/week and 3 weeks duration. Can begin at about 2 weeks of age and may settle at about 3-4 months Parents attempt to calm the baby by feeding, rocking, talking, singing, walking but baby remains inconsolable However when babies are not crying they are happy and content. Baby is not hungry and is well fed Generally occurs in the afternoon- evenings. Babies appear to be in pain, displaying a high pitch cry, clenched fists and legs drawn to the tummy.</p> <p>Although colic does not cause long term effects it can be very distressing for the parents. Seek medical advice if you are struggling.</p>

The cause of colic is unexplained however there are many theories	Managing Colic
<p>1) Excessive wind and abdominal cramping Seems logical, however studies with imaging of the GI tract do not support the theory</p> <p>2) Maternal anxiety and stress Has not been proven</p> <p>3) Breastfeeding vs. formula feeding Both breast fed and formula fed babies develop colic Cow's milk protein allergy and lactose intolerance should be ruled out For breast-fed mothers – exclusions diets can be tried if allergy is suspected, reducing caffeine intake may help</p> <p><u>When to see a Doctor or go to the ER</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 1 month old, looks or acts abnormal in any way • Less than 12 weeks old with fever. (Caution: Do NOT give baby any fever medicine before being seen) • If spitting up a lot of milk/ coughing or not gaining weight. • Reflux, constipation or possible food allergy • Blood in the stools and persistent loose stools (do not occur with colic). • Bulging or swollen soft spot/fontanelle • Swollen scrotum or groin • Vomiting • Cries when you touch, move or hold baby • Nonstop crying lasts more than 2 hours. • Will not drink or drinks very little for more than 8 hours • Not alert when awake • Looks or acts very sick 	<p>1) <u>Create a clam quiet environment</u>: reduce stimuli with dark room, swaddling, quiet to reduce crying Avoid rocking, talking, feeding Hold baby flat and try to relax and calm.</p> <p>2) <u>Medication to reduce excessive gas</u>: e.g Simethicone Research shows this to be as effective as the placebo, however is worth a try</p> <p>3) <u>Mother to drink herbal teas</u>: with fennel or chamomile Studies have not confirmed their effectiveness</p> <p>4) <u>Gripe Water</u>: Commercial preparation that contains herbal extracts, sugar and some with alcohol</p> <p>5) <u>Infant massage</u>: Beneficial with bonding Research has not proven effectiveness with treatment for colic</p> <p>6) <u>Consider comforting actions if quiet environment not effective</u>: Pacifier, warm bath, walk in a stroller, consider a swing or vibrating chair, rock baby in a rocking chair, cradle or while standing. May calm with rapid tiny movements</p> <p>7) <u>White noise for crying</u>: white noise on a loud volume. E.g. CD, vacuum cleaner, fan or other constant sound. Keep the white noise on any time baby is crying. When baby is awake and not crying, turn off the white noise so baby can get used to the normal sounds of your home.</p> <p>8) <u>Cry to sleep</u>: If you've tried comforting and your baby isn't hungry, put him in the crib. Let your baby cry himself to sleep as for some overtired babies this may be the answer. If 3 hours have passed since napping, then baby needs to sleep.</p> <p>9) <u>Encourage night-time sleep</u> (rather than daytime sleep): Try to limit sleeping during the daytime. Wake baby if he/she has napped longer than 2 hours.</p> <p>10) <u>Involve other carers</u>: excessive crying in babies can cause increased maternal anxiety and can be exhausted to cope with. Allow yourself to have a break and let another carer soothe the baby from time to time.</p>

Please speak to your doctor or your well-baby nurse today if you are unsure or have any questions or concerns