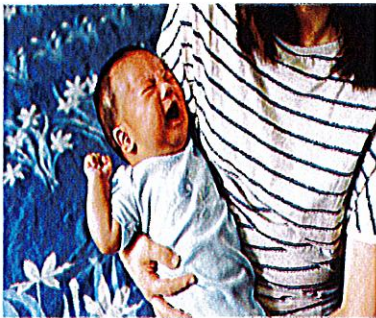


12 Ways to Soothe a Crying Baby

✓ Reviewed November 21, 2018

From crying to colic to gas, here are a few calming techniques that will help soothe a fussy baby.

Soothing a Fussy Baby



Babies cry for all sorts of reasons. Sometimes it's easy to calm them down: All it takes is a feeding, a burp, a diaper change or your calm voice and gentle touch. But then there are *other* times when your baby — possibly even because she's going through a bout of colic — may seem inconsolable no matter what you do. It may even be enough to drive you to tears. But don't lose hope. First, try to nail down the type of baby's cries and rule out any obvious culprits (like a dirty diaper or an empty tummy) along with any symptoms of illness that warrant a call to the doctor, such as a fever or runny nose, or signs of pain, like swollen gums. Still got a fussy baby on your hands? Try these 12 time-tested techniques that'll help clear the tears and make you both feel better.

Swaddle Your Baby



Swaddling your baby in a receiving blanket keeps your little bundle feeling cozy and secure. Experts think swaddling soothes babies because it creates a womb-like feeling. Many parents find swaddling helps their babies settle down faster and sleep longer. Some babies prefer their arms to be left out of the swaddle, either because they self-soothe by sucking their fingers or simply because they like their freedom. You can easily leave their arms out of the swaddle by placing them with the blanket's top edge at armpit level instead of at chin-level.

Encourage Sucking



Babies often soothe themselves with nonnutritive sucking, which doesn't fill their tummies but does calm their nerves. If your baby is crying, help her find her thumb, fist or finger, or simply offer one of your own fingers for a stint. Binkies or pacifiers can also do the trick, though you might want to consider waiting until breastfeeding is well established before introducing one.

Wear Baby in a Front-Pack Carrier



Wearing your baby and walking around is a great way to soothe her. Babies enjoy the feeling of closeness and the rhythm of your steps. The carrier is also convenient because your hands remain free for multitasking. Have your baby face your body in a front-pack carrier or a sling for the first three months when she needs the extra head support. You can also use a sling, which are particularly useful for on-the-go nursing and can convert to a side or back hold when your baby gets older. If your baby balks at being in a sling or front carrier at first, don't give up. Babies learn to enjoy this.

Rock in a Chair or Glider



Rocking a baby in a rocking chair or glider is probably one of life's most cherished and time-honored rituals. Modern parenting offers some hands-free rocking options too: When your baby is fussing, consider putting her in a motorized baby swing, vibrating bouncy seat or an automatic cradle. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's safety instructions regarding the age and weight restrictions for these devices. And try not to let your baby get in the habit of

nodding off in them because she might become dependent on the motion to fall asleep over time. Instead, let her get to the brink of sleep, and then transfer her to her crib.

Soothe with White Noise



Some babies calm down to rhythmic whooshing sounds, which may remind them of the womb. See if turning on a vacuum cleaner, hair dryer or fan may work to block out the random noises that can startle your baby when she's trying to settle down. Alternatively, invest in a special white-noise machine or mobile. If you're in a pinch and don't have any gadgets handy, try shushing your baby with "Shhhhhh... shhhh... shhhh..." sounds.

Sing a Song



Your baby has no idea whether you sing off-key or with perfect pitch. What she does know is that whenever she's being crooned to, you're there with her. So, the next time she's cranky, sing her a classic lullaby, a cheesy 80s power ballad or whatever tune comes to mind. She'll be comforted just by the sound of your voice.

Wash Away the Tears



If your baby tends to get mellow at bath time, fill up the tub with warm water and make it a regular part of her chill-out routine. You can even try introducing a little aromatherapy. As a bonus, adding a few drops of a lavender- or chamomile-infused soap to the water may help soothe you as well. Just remember that some babies become stimulated by the bath. If this is true for your little one, make sure to schedule your *baby's bath time* before playtime.

Give a Massage



Massaging your baby can be a relaxing ritual for both of you, and it's a great way to calm your little one's cries. You can experiment with lotion or special baby massage oils, though neither is necessary. Use a gentle touch, but make sure it's firm enough not to be ticklish.

- Stroke her chest from the center outward and make small circles on her stomach, around her belly button.
- Gently roll her arms and legs between your hands, taking turns with each limb, or try alternating your hands in a

"milking" motion as you stroke each limb from her core to the extremity.

- Unfurl her fists and rub her palms and fingers.
- Massage the soles of her feet and uncurl her toes, too.
- If she doesn't mind, try turning her on her tummy and stroking her back from side to side, then up and down.

Try the "Colic Carry"



Sometimes when your baby is crying inconsolably what she needs is some pressure on her tummy — or what's known as the "colic carry" — to help relieve gas and *colic*:

- Lay your baby on her tummy on your forearm, cradling her head in your hand. Use your other hand to stabilize her and rub her back.
- Lay her across your lap, with one knee in her tummy and the other supporting her head.
- Hold her upright, with her abdomen on your shoulder.
- Lay her on her back and pushing her knees up to her tummy for 10 seconds, then release and repeat, to help relieve gas.

Get Outside



The motion may be all she needs to calm right down. Fresh air can also work wonders both for cranky babies and their bedraggled moms. While it may feel beyond your powers to get ready for a walk when your child is fussing, you won't be sorry if you persevere. The change in light, air, temperature, sights, sounds and smells is likely to improve your baby's mood — and yours too. If the weather is bad or your neighborhood isn't a good one for strolling, try strapping baby into her car seat and taking a drive.

Entertain



Even young babies can get bored — and if they do, it can cause them to get fussy. To keep your little one entertained, try narrating your actions, replete with silly noises and animated expressions. You may also try sitting on the floor with her and showing her how her toys rattle and spin. Some babies love to look at and listen to you read a simple rhyming board book, while

others get the giggles if you turn on some tunes and dance with them.

Keep Calm and Carry On



If overstimulation seems to be the problem, take everything down a few notches. Dim the lights, turn off the music, put your phone on vibrate and just mellow out with your baby. Remember, everything is completely new to her, and at times this can be overwhelming. If she's colicky, it is especially important to keep things calm and quiet in the late afternoon and evening, when colic is often at its peak.

