

# Common Infant Problems

(Birth – 1 year)

# Crying

## \* Why do babies cry?

Crying is one way a baby talks to you. As you get to know your baby, you will learn what he wants. Crying may be a sign of a problem, so it is important to respond quickly when your baby cries. A quick response also helps your baby calm down faster.

Babies may cry when they are thirsty or hungry, have a wet diaper, or when they are too hot or too cold. Babies also cry when they are uncomfortable, bored, in need of attention, afraid, or hurt. Some babies may cry late in the day, when they are too tired or too excited.



## \* What can I do?

- **Thirsty or hungry** – Watch for signs of hunger, such as sucking on his lips, finger, or fist. Feed your baby before he gets too upset.
- **Wet diaper** – Change a wet or dirty diaper as soon as you know it is wet.
- **Too cold or too hot** – Take off or put on clothes or blankets to help keep your baby comfortable.
- **Uncomfortable** – Change his position in his bed or carrier. He may be stuck in an odd position, such as lying on his arm.
- **Bored or in need of attention** – Hold, rock, play with, or touch your baby. Play music, sing, talk, or read to him.
- **Too excited or afraid** – Hold, rock, and talk softly to calm your baby. If the room is noisy, try to make it quieter. Place the baby on your chest, skin to skin. Some babies like to be wrapped snugly in a blanket.
- **Stomach pains or colic** – Lay your baby on his stomach across your legs and gently pat his back or rock him.
- **Hurt** – Check for red marks or scratches. Make sure diapers and clothing are put on comfortably.
- **Tired** – He may need to sleep. Try placing him on his back and see if he settles down.



## What if nothing seems to help?

If your baby continues to cry and you have checked for all of the above, your baby may be sick. Call your doctor or clinic for help if your baby has:

- A body temperature above 99°F
- Watery stools
- Vomiting
- Fewer than 6 to 8 wet diapers in a day
- A skin rash
- Crying that will not stop

Remember: **Respond quickly when your baby cries.** Although crying is natural, too much crying may not be good for a baby. You cannot spoil your baby by holding him. Holding your baby will comfort him and make him feel loved and secure.

If you or your partner get upset with your baby's constant crying, call your doctor, a friend, or the Shaken Baby Alliance at 1-877-636-3727 (1-800-6-END-SBS), 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. or ChildHelp USA 1-800-422-4453 (1-800-4-A-CHILD) anytime.



For more information on infant crying visit the Mayo Clinic [www.mayoclinic.com/health/healthy-baby/PR00037](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/healthy-baby/PR00037) or search for “crying baby” on Medline Plus <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus>.