

TIPS FOR SAFELY SOOTHING A CRYING BABY

Babies cry for many reasons and it can be stressful on a parent or caregiver when your baby doesn't respond to attempts at soothing and/or crying becomes prolonged. This is referred to as inconsolable crying. This type of crying usually peaks around two months of age. It is unpredictable, often happening for no apparent reason. There is typically a pain-like expression on the baby's face. Crying bouts are often long, lasting 30 to 40 minutes or more, and commonly occur in the evening.

Being a first time parent or caregiver, transitions back to work and other factors can leave parents feeling increased worry or stress about inconsolable crying in their baby. For a parent or caregiver, the most important thing is staying calm and aware that your baby needs your care and support, even if you may be feeling stress or frustration. It is important to take care of yourself and manage your own stress so you are able to care for your baby. It can be helpful to have friends or family members who are available to give assistance if your baby's crying becomes too upsetting for you; consider planning in advance so you have someone to call for help if this occurs. It is critical that you **DO NOT** shake a baby to manage crying or for any other reason because this can lead to severe injury or death. Fortunately, planning in advance and understanding techniques to manage crying can help reduce stress for both you and your baby. Below is information that can help you care for your baby and yourself when managing inconsolable crying:

Meet the Baby's Basic Needs First:

- Feed the baby
- Burp the baby
- Change the diaper
- Make sure clothing isn't too tight
- Make sure the baby isn't too hot or too cold
- If you suspect the baby is ill, call a doctor

Additional Techniques for Soothing a Baby:

- Sit and rock with the baby
- Offer the baby a pacifier
- Lower any surrounding noise and lights
- Offer the baby a rattle toy and gently shake it

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- Sing or talk to the baby in soothing tones
- Create "white" or background noise with a fan or sound machine
- Swaddle the baby; before attempting this, discuss safe swaddling techniques with your healthcare provider
- Hold the baby and breathe slowly and calmly; the baby may feel your calmness and become quiet
- Take the baby for a walk outside in a stroller or for a ride in the car seat

Additional Helpful Tips:

- Increasing the amount of carrying, comforting, walking, and talking can reduce crying by 50%
- Be patient, take a deep breath and count to 10; remember, when you are calm, it helps the baby to feel calm and helps you to make safer decisions
- If you are beginning to feel stressed, call a friend or relative to talk with or whom you can trust to take over for a while, then get away, get some rest, and take care of yourself; getting help before you become overwhelmed is caretaking of you and your baby
- If the crying is too upsetting, put the baby down in a safe place, and take a break from the crying; it is better to leave the baby crying in a safe place and allow yourself to calm down than become so upset that you lose control
- Remember... **NEVER SHAKE A BABY!**

Adapted from the USACHPPM "Tips for Soothing a Crying Baby"

Resources:

Crying Baby Hotline 1-866-243-BABY (2229), Available 24/7
 Military OneSource call 1-800-342-9647, Available 24/7
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>
 Local Army Community Service or visit
[https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Army-Community-Service-\(ACS\)?serv=120](https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Army-Community-Service-(ACS)?serv=120)
 National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome:
<https://dontshake.org/>