

Children's Emergency Department

Crying baby and colic - parent/carer discharge information



Crying is normal. Crying is the only way babies can let you know that something is upsetting them and that they need you. They will cry when hungry, thirsty, wet, too hot, too cold, off colour, sick in the tummy, in pain, over tired or uncomfortable, or when startled. You may not be able to work out what exactly is wrong – you cannot always stop the crying, but you can always comfort your baby. Do not let yourself feel you are failing as a parent if you cannot stop the crying – you are not. It is common.

Some babies develop colic at the age of a few weeks where they suffer bouts of crying, usually worse in the afternoon and evenings. The cause is unknown, and various over the counter treatments for colic are available at pharmacies. These bouts usually settle after 6 to 8 weeks. Such bouts are terribly worrying, upsetting, and wearing for you as the parent. However, you must never get cross with your baby or shake them. If you start to feel desperate, place baby in a safe place and walk into another room for a short break.

Try the suggestions below and see which works best for your baby

- Hold and comfort your baby keeping them snuggled close and still
- Walk around with your baby, with or without a pouch or sling, rocking or swaying gently and singing to baby – they like slow, rhythmical movement
- Sucking can help calm a baby – you can try a dummy



Patient Information

- If breastfeeding, then let baby feed, but try to limit feeds to 3 per hour if you can
- If your baby has colic, try placing your baby horizontally over your knee with their tummy against/ across your knee, and rock gently
- **Or**, walking around holding your baby upright facing away from you with one arm across their chest and one across their legs, stretching the legs out straight – this helps put a stretch on the tummy muscles and eases the tummy pain
- **Or** rub your baby's tummy in a circular clockwise motion gently
- **Or** try a warm bath – check it is not too hot, and never leave your baby unattended

When should I seek medical advice?

- If the sound of your baby's cry changes, particularly to a constant scream
- If you think your baby is ill or you think they have a physical problem

For further advice/information:

- Call 111 (24 hours a day)
- Speak to your Health Visitor

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, contact 024 7696 6934 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet, please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

Document History

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