

Infant crying and how to cope



Information for parents and carers

ICON Babies Cry, You Can Cope!

A baby's cry can be upsetting and frustrating. It is designed to get your attention and you may be worried that something is wrong with your baby.

Your baby may start to cry more frequently at about 2 weeks of age. The crying may get more frequent and last longer during the next few weeks, hitting a peak at about 6 to 8 weeks.

Every baby is different, but after about 8 weeks, babies start to cry less and less each week.

What can I do to help my baby?

Comfort methods can sometimes soothe the baby and the crying will stop.

Babies can cry for reasons such as if they are hungry, tired, wet/dirty or if they are unwell.

Check these basic needs and try some simple calming techniques:

- Talk calmly, hum or sing to your baby
- Let them hear a repeating or soothing sound
- Hold them close – skin to skin
- Go for a walk outside with your baby
- Give them a warm bath

These techniques may not always work. It may take a combination or more than one attempt to soothe your baby. If you think there is something wrong with your baby or the crying won't stop speak to your GP, Midwife or Health Visitor. If you are worried that your baby is unwell, call NHS 111.

The crying won't stop, what can I do now?

Not every baby is easy to calm but that doesn't mean you are doing anything wrong. Don't get angry with your baby or yourself. Instead, put your baby in a safe place and walk away so that you can calm yourself down by doing something that takes your mind off the crying. Try:

- Listening to music, doing some exercises or doing something that calms you
- Call a relative or friend – they may be able to help you calm or may be able to watch your baby

After a few minutes when you are calm, go back and check on the baby. It's normal for parents to get stressed, especially by crying. Put some time aside for yourself and take care of your needs as well as your baby's to help you cope.

What not to do...

Handling a baby roughly will make them more upset. Shouting or getting angry with your baby will make things worse.

Sometimes parents and people looking after babies get so angry and frustrated with a baby's cry they lose control.

They act on impulse and shake their baby.

Shaking or losing your temper with a baby is very dangerous and can cause:

- Blindness
- Learning disabilities
- Seizures
- Physical disabilities
- Death

Remember – This phase will stop! Be an ICON for your baby and cope with their crying.

Babies Cry, You Can Cope!

- I** Infant crying is normal and it will stop
- C** Comfort methods can sometimes soothe the baby and the crying will stop
- O** It's OK to walk away if you have checked the baby is safe and the crying is getting to you
- N** Never ever shake or hurt a baby

Share the ICON message!

It isn't just parents who get frustrated at a baby's cry. Think very carefully about who you ask to look after your baby.

Share the ICON message with anyone who may look after your baby.

Check that grandparents, other family members and friends all understand about how to cope with crying before you decide to leave your baby with them.

Further information and support

www.manchesterlco.org/ICON

For a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or audio tape, please email or call:

Email: communicationsmanchester@nhs.net

Call: 0161 765 4004