

Calming a Crying Newborn



Your newborn is crying, now what? Try these quick solutions to calm him down.

Hold the Baby Skin-to-skin

Skin-to-skin contact reduces stress levels for both mother and baby (Read our handout “Skin-to-skin Contact”). When the baby is calm, then offer the breast.

Let the Baby Suck

Offer a finger (or pacifier) for the baby to suck on for a minute or two. Sucking is a way babies sooth themselves. (Read our handout “Pacifier Use”)

Give a Taste

Hand express milk from the nipple for the baby to taste. Or dribble milk over the nipple to entice him to the breast.

Provide Motion

Pick the baby up, rock, walk, bounce or dance. Babies are used to constant motion while in the uterus. Providing motion reminds them of “home”.

Offer Swaddling

Wrap the baby snugly for a few minutes (see photo)



Check Baby’s Skin Temperature

Feel your baby’s tummy and make sure he is not too hot or too cold. (Read also our handout “Keeping Your Baby Warm”)

Stay Calm

Babies are sensitive to your stress level. Remain calm and your baby may follow suit.

Reduce Stimulation

Too much stimulation, for too long, can be overwhelming for babies. Dim the lights, make no sounds and give the baby a break. Sometimes white noise like the sound of a hair dryer or vacuum cleaner helps.

Burp your Baby or Bicycle his Legs

Maybe there is a burp that needs to come up or gas that needs to go down.

Do Something Different

If none of these solutions work, distract your baby with something different. Blow in his face, sing or hum, hold him up over your head or give a bath.

Watch for feeding cues for the next feeding:

- Waking up
- Licking lips & sticking tongue out
- Sucking sound
- Rooting
- Hand to mouth activity
- Generalized body movements

Feed the baby before the last feeding cue: crying.

You won’t spoil your baby by attending to his needs!