

The first few months.

Quick facts

The average baby cries for as much as 2 hours a day* and this is often related to hunger, a dirty nappy or tiredness. When a baby cries, it can be hard to cope with, but understanding some of the reasons why and sharing another parent's advice can be helpful.

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The following checklist may help to soothe your baby:

A baby with colic will often cry for much longer than this and can be difficult to soothe or at times seem unsoothable.

- Is baby hungry?
Offer breast or bottle feed.
- Is baby in pain?
Check for temperature, baby's normal temperature is about 36.4 C, over 37.5C is usually considered a fever.
Offer breast or bottle.
Try gently massaging babies tummy in a clockwise direction.
Try changing winding positions or hold baby upright on your shoulder.
Walk around with baby - a sling can be helpful but always follow safe sling guidelines. <https://babyslingsafety.co.uk/ticks.pdf>
Try gentle rocking.
- Is baby fighting sleep?
Offer breast or bottle.
Check that baby is comfortable and that clothing is not too tight, and nappy is clean and dry.
Try rocking in your arms.
Try a softer light or darker room.
Gentle background noise can be soothing, there are many different apps available but even gentle music can help.
Try skin to skin contact.
Check baby is not too hot or cold. Feel their chest or back of neck. Advice on temperature for safe sleep is available here <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/safer-sleep-basics/baby-room-temperature/>
If appropriate take baby out in the buggy, the movement and fresh air can be soothing.
Try a warm bath if baby normally finds a bath relaxing.
If baby seems very agitated when being held, try putting them down for a few minutes in their usual sleeping place, they may settle by themselves.

Consult your Health Visitor or G.P if nothing seems to work at all or you are worried in any way.

- Is baby uncomfortable?
Check baby's temperature and adjust clothing accordingly.
Try winding baby.
Change nappy.
Check for nappy rash – consult your Health Visitor for advice if needed.
- Sensitive baby?
Handle and talk to baby gently and quietly.
Don't overwhelm baby with stimulation.
Limit number of visitors so baby has some quieter times.
- Is baby generally unsettled and irritable?
Check for temperature.
Talk or sing softly to baby.
Gentle rocking and movement.
Try a bouncy chair or seat – always follow manufacturers safety guidelines and if baby falls asleep take them out and place them in their normal sleeping place.
Offer a feed.
A warm bath if baby usually finds that soothing.
Take baby out in buggy.
Try soft background music or other soothing noises.
- Does baby have colic?
Symptoms of colic include crying that lasts several hours, especially in the late afternoon or evening.
Baby can be red faced, clenching fists, drawing knees up to their tummy and arching their back.

The following suggestions may help:

Make sure you wind baby well after a feed.

Hold baby upright on your shoulder. Hold in a slightly more upright position when feeding.

Gently massage baby's tummy in a clockwise position and bring knees gently up to tummy.

If you feel your baby is in pain or discomfort, if the sound of the cry changes or baby is vomiting after a feed or showing any other signs that are causing you concern, do consult your G.P. or Health Visitor. If you feel it is urgent and it is out of hours contact NHS