

Calming a Fussy Breastfed Baby

Crying is often related to hunger, and feeding is the obvious solution. However, periods of crying, with no obvious cause and no ready cure, plague many parents. Here are a few suggestions. Give several a try. One may work today and another may work tomorrow. Be flexible, and know that "this too will pass".

Symptoms:

- Periods of inconsolable crying
- Clenching fists
- Drawing legs up to abdomen
- Stiffening as if in pain
- Passing gas
- Grimacing

Possible causes: (may be more than one)

- Immature gastro-intestinal system
- Sensitive nervous system
- Excessive gas or over-feeding
- Formula intolerance
- Reaction to foods the breastfeeding mother has eaten
- Over-stimulation

Possible remedies:

- Hold your baby skin-to-skin
- Motion in any form
 - Walking
 - Baby swing
 - Rocking in rocking chair
 - Rocking side to side while standing
 - Ride in the car or in a stroller
 - Carry baby in infant sling
- Over-the-counter gas-relief drops (discuss with MD)
- Singing, humming
- White sound (running water, vacuum, clothes dryer, hair dryer)
- Commercially available recordings with strong beat designed to simulate intrauterine sounds
- Hold your baby skin to skin several times each day
- Swaddle your baby snugly
- Undress your baby and allow complete freedom of motion
- Avoid over-stimulation from noises, lights or motion
- Distract the baby with different sounds, sights or places
- Place pressure on your baby's abdomen (gently)
 - Hold baby in the "colic hold" (facing floor, supported by your arm, heel of your hand putting pressure on the abdomen)
 - Hold baby over your shoulder or over your knees
- Bicycle your baby's legs
- Keep a food diary to determine if a particular food bothers your baby (takes 4-6 hours)
- Consult a Lactation Consultant who may suggest feeding on only one breast per feeding or other techniques to balance the "foremilk" and "hindmilk" your baby obtains while feeding
- Take a break, let someone else try for awhile; babies sense your tension.

