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# Excessive Crying in Babies

## Paediatrics Department

# Excessive Crying in Babies

## INTRODUCTION

### Why do babies cry?

Babies cry for many reasons. They cry to let you know what they need; for example they may be hungry, wet, tired, hot, too full, uncomfortable, unwell or lonely. Some babies develop colic at a few weeks old: this often occurs at a certain time of day and can last for a few weeks. Generally babies cry less as they get older, and parents can more easily work out what they want. Up to a quarter of all babies cry excessively. Most of these babies will stop crying after three months of age, although some take longer to settle down.

### WHEN TO SEEK HELP?

If your baby's cry is very different from his/her usual cry, or if your baby cries constantly through the day rather than just a few times, you may need to see your GP or Health Visitor.

You should also see your GP if your baby is unwell. Signs that your baby may be unwell include fever, vomiting, diarrhoea, breathing difficulties or poor weight gain.

If you are not sure whether to see a Doctor you can call NHS Direct on **0845 4647**.

### WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

Try to find out what helps you and your baby. Some babies find a routine during the day of feed, play and sleep helpful. At night you should settle your baby straight after a feed. This needs to be done calmly and quietly to stop your baby becoming excited or anxious. A good bedtime routine – bath, dim lights, soothing music etc. may help.

Responding quickly to your baby when he/she is crying very hard can help your baby cry less later on.

Make sure your baby is not too hot or uncomfortable. Some babies like being held in a curled position to calm them down. You can try gently patting or rocking your baby, or try soothing them with a dummy.

Some babies like being carried about - a sling or baby carrier is helpful for some colicky babies. If you're sure your baby is not unwell or hungry,

ignoring them can be an effective behavioural intervention especially for sleep problems but do discuss with your Health Visitor.

It is generally unclear whether medicines will help crying in babies. If you do use medicines please follow the instructions carefully.

Try to have a break. Let grandparents, family or friends look after your baby for a few hours and take some time out to look after yourself.

**Remember** Crying is normal in babies.

Some babies cry more than others. If your baby cries a lot this does not mean you are a bad parent.

Your baby will eventually stop crying.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Speak to your Health Visitor or GP.

NHS Direct can be contacted at any time of the day for reassurance or advice on **0845 4647** or visit their website at [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

Cry-sis is a National support group for parents of crying babies. They can be contacted by telephone on **08451 228669** or visit their website at [www.cry-sis.org.uk](http://www.cry-sis.org.uk)

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## Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01932 723553 or email [pals@asph.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@asph.nhs.uk). If you still remain concerned please contact our Complaints Manager on 01932 722612 or email [complaints@asph.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints@asph.nhs.uk).

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