



Coping with a crying baby

All babies cry. Crying can mean hunger or a dirty or wet nappy, or they may just need a cuddle, a song, a walk or a ride to soothe them.

Your baby will cry to tell you what they need; as you get to know them better you will learn what each cry and sound means. Responding to their crying will make baby feel secure and safe. Here are some tips to help you to cope with a crying baby.

All babies cry and some cry a lot. Crying is how baby tries to tell you what they need. Sometimes it's easy to work out what baby wants and sometimes it isn't.

How to help a crying baby

- Breastfeed your baby.
- Hold your baby or put baby in a sling or a front pack so that they are close to you.
- Rock your baby in the pram or go out for a walk or drive.
- Play some music.

Your midwife or nurse will have lots of experience with crying babies. Talk to them about how to calm your baby.

Crying can mean that your baby is unwell

If your baby's cry is unusual – such as piercing and high pitched – take them to a doctor straight away (see [Danger signs \(your health/pregnancy-and-kids/first-year/helpful-advice-during-first-year/baby-and-child-sickness-danger-signs\)](https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/pregnancy-and-kids/first-year/helpful-advice-during-first-year/baby-and-child-sickness-danger-signs)).

Colic

When a baby cries and cannot be comforted easily, the problem could be what is called 'colic'. Colic usually happens in the afternoon or evening or after a feed, and it can be very upsetting.

No-one really knows what causes colic and it usually disappears after the first 3 months. If you think your baby is crying a lot, talk to your midwife, nurse or doctor.

When your baby keeps on crying

One of the hardest times can be when your baby keeps on crying and you can't work out why. If you find yourself getting upset, it's OK to put your baby down gently in a safe place, walk away and take a break.

Do not pick up your baby until you have calmed down. Your baby is more likely to calm down when you are feeling calm and in control.

Look after yourself. Make a cup of tea or coffee, or phone a friend or someone in your whānau.

You could also phone PlunketLine on 0800 933 922 or Healthline on 0800 611 116 for advice or support.

Never shake a baby

Never, ever shake a baby. Never leave a baby alone with anyone who may lose control. A single moment of losing control may damage a baby forever. Babies can die if they are shaken.

If you ever think your baby has been hurt, call 111. Don't let fear or pride stand in your way. It could save your baby's life.

The Kidshealth website has a video called [Power to Protect](http://www.kidshealth.org.nz/shaken-baby-syndrome) (<http://www.kidshealth.org.nz/shaken-baby-syndrome>) about how to cope with the stress of a baby's crying and what can happen if a baby is shaken.

Related websites

[Crying: what to do – Kidshealth](http://www.kidshealth.org.nz/crying-what-do) (<http://www.kidshealth.org.nz/crying-what-do>)

Why babies cry and what you can do about it.

[Shaken baby syndrome – Kidshealth](http://www.kidshealth.org.nz/shaken-baby-syndrome) (<http://www.kidshealth.org.nz/shaken-baby-syndrome>)

Why you should never shake a baby. Also includes the Power to Protect video.

