

Tips for Parents



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Parenting.
Give it time.
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Understanding and Responding to a Crying Baby

All babies cry and sometimes it can be hard to cope with. Crying is your baby's way of telling you what they are thinking and feeling, and that they need your help to soothe them. With time, you'll get to know your baby, and what their different cries mean.



Your baby may cry when they are:

- **Hungry** – your baby may need to feed more often than you think. If it has been an hour since the last feed your baby may be hungry.
- **Lonely** – your baby feels safe when they can see your face, hear your voice, smell you and feel your touch. Crying is their way of asking to be held to feel safe.
- **Wet or dirty** – check to see if their nappy is wet or dirty and change them if they are.
- **Tired** – try gentle rocking in a dimly lit room.
- **Too hot or too cold** – for advice on safe temperatures and dressing see: www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/baby-room-temperature/.
- **Uncomfortable** – your baby may feel uncomfortable because of something scratchy like clothing tags or a zip.
- **Overstimulated** – your baby may have got too excited, especially if there have been lots of visitors or things going on, with lots of sounds, sights and smells. Try taking your baby to a room without other people and near a plain wall.
- **Struggling with wind** – trapped air can be painful. Try rubbing your baby's back to burp them.
- **Unwell or have a fever** – if they have a high temperature, they may have an illness. If you think there's something wrong contact **NHS 111 Wales** (www.111.wales.nhs.uk) for advice. You can call them on **111**.

Ways to try and comfort your crying baby

- **Holding your baby** where they will be able to see you easily or feel your familiar heartbeat. During a baby's first month, they can focus only as far as the face of the person holding them.
- **Hold your baby close, smile at them, talk, sing or hum.** Humming is also calming for adults, creating rhythmic vibrations.
- **Try stroking your baby's back** or gently sway to create a rhythm that is reassuring.
- **Skin to skin contact** like baby massage can soothe your baby and you may find it relaxing too.
- **If you're breastfeeding** offer the breast.
- **If you're bottle feeding** consider offering a dummy. Sterilise dummies as with bottles. Don't dip them in anything sweet and try to limit their use.
- **Give your baby a bath** or try going for a walk together.

Remember to never shake your baby. This can damage their brain. Always support your baby's neck and head whenever you lift them or lay them down.

If it is getting too much for you, put your baby in a safe place (e.g. a clear, safe cot away from animals) and leave the room for just a moment until you feel calmer. Or ask a friend or family member to care for your baby for a while so you can have time to feel better. You may also find it helpful to contact the **Cry-sis** (English language) helpline on **08451 228 669**.

If you are worried about your baby's crying, ask your health visitor or GP for advice. It might help to keep a record of how often and when your baby cries.

It's OK to ask for help

There are services and organisations which can give you support and advice.

You may find these helplines useful:

- **Community Advice and Listening Line (C.A.L.L)** – **callhelpline.org.uk** – call on **0800 132 737** (24 hour service), or text 'help' to **81066**. This is a confidential helpline which offers emotional support on mental health and related matters.
- **Samaritans** (**samaritans.org**) on **116 123** (confidential 24 hour service). You can get in touch about anything that's troubling you, no matter how large or small the issue.

Where to get advice and support

Universal parenting support and advice is provided by midwives, health visitors, GPs and your local authority. Early help programmes such as Flying Start (if you live in a Flying Start area) and Families First are also available.

Look after yourself. Meeting up with other parents can be great for your wellbeing. Your local **Family Information Service** (**www.fis.wales**) will be able to tell you what's on in your area.

For positive parenting tips and expert advice, visit: **gov.wales/giveittime**

