



Children's Health

Crying

WHAT IT MEANS AND HOW YOU CAN STOP IT

THE NATURE OF CRYING

Crying is a baby's first means of communication. Crying also distracts the baby from hunger pangs and other unpleasant things (such as a wet diaper). A crying baby can be unnerving, but never handle a baby roughly. Shaking or other rough handling can cause irreparable brain damage and even death. Always be patient and calm. Be sure to contact your baby's doctor if the cry is feeble, your baby is inconsolable or the cry sounds strange (unusually high-pitched, etc.). If you think your baby is ill, don't be embarrassed to call the doctor.

BREAST-FEEDING BABIES

If you're breast-feeding and your baby has emptied both breasts but is still crying and irritable, it's possible that there's a temporary shortage of breast milk. Try feeding your baby more often. Make sure you're drinking enough liquids, eating enough and getting enough sleep. Check with your doctor or lactation specialist for further advice.

BOTTLE-FED BABIES

Powdered and concentrated formulas require exact mixing. If your baby cries between and after feedings, it's possible that he is not getting enough nourishment. A mixture of formula that's too weak or a nipple hole that's too small could be the cause. You may also want to try another brand of formula or soy formula. Check with your doctor. Stool that's small, firm and dark green is a sign of inadequate feeding.

TEETHING

Most babies cut their first teeth between 4 months and 2 years of age. Before teeth erupt, the baby may drool, rub her gums and cry for weeks or even months. Your baby should stop crying within a few days of the tooth

eruption. Acetaminophen, teething tablets and topical anaesthetics are available for babies. Chewing on a cold washcloth or teething toys may help.

PASSING URINE

It's possible that your baby is crying when passing urine. If he begins to cry after the diaper is wet, look for a red, sore or spotty bottom. This indicates a diaper rash. If there's no rash, an infection or hernia could be the cause. See your baby's doctor to find out what's causing the problem.

COLIC

A baby that begins crying about the same time every day, usually following the late afternoon or early evening meal, may suffer from colic. Babies with colic act as if they have a stomach ache by drawing up their legs and passing gas. There's no specific treatment for colic. However, every baby, especially colicky babies, should be burped thoroughly after every feeding. Colic almost always ends by 4 months of age. Vibrating or repetitive sounds may help soothe your baby.

FEVER

If your baby is crying and feels warm, take her temperature. Fever in a baby under 6 months of age can be potentially dangerous. If the baby's rectal temperature is more than 100.5° F, call your child's doctor.

