



Parenting Tips: Nurturing Your Child

Babies and young children cry as a way of telling you that they have a need. When you respond to your baby's cries, you not only make the baby happy, but you also are teaching your baby to trust. Newborns often cry 2 to 3 hours a day. Premature babies may cry up to 6 hours a day. Most babies have a fussy time each day. When your baby starts to cry, check to see what they are trying to tell you.

I am hungry.	I am thirsty.	I am too cold or too hot.
I have gas pains.	I am sick.	I am afraid.
I am bored.	I hurt.	It's too noisy.
I am lonely.	I have a wet or dirty diaper.	I am in a bad mood.
I am tired.	Too many people are holding me.	

There is no single way to comfort a crying baby. It takes time to learn what your baby responds to and prefers. Get to know your baby and what different cries mean. You can't spoil babies at this age. As they learn that you are going to help them, they will cry less.

- Check my diaper. I will need to be changed at least every 3 hours when I am awake.
- Feed me if I am hungry. It takes 2 or 3 hours for my stomach to empty.
- Feel my skin to see if I am too hot or cold. I may be over- or underdressed. A baby feels damp on the back if too warm.
- Don't feed me cereal or solid food until you have talked with my doctor. A baby may not be able to digest solid foods when very young.
- Don't leave me in an infant seat or baby bed too long. I like to be where I can see, hear and talk to you. Babies enjoy doing activities. They can become bored or lonely.

Help me stop crying:

Pick me up and hold me.	Snuggle with me.	Walk or dance with me.
Wrap me in a blanket.	Talk or sing to me.	Play soft music.
Give me something to look at or play with.	Give me a pacifier.	Lower the lights.
Sit with me in a rocking chair.	Take me for a ride in the car or in a stroller.	

If nothing works, place me in a safe, quiet room and let me cry for 5 minutes. If I still don't settle down, take a deep breath, pick me up and try again.

Never shake a baby!

Shaking can cause brain damage or even death. Your baby will outgrow the crying. If you are starting to feel angry, ask or call someone to give you a break.

Call the Texas HEART line at 1.800.554.2323. They will listen to you and offer support and suggestions. You don't have to give your name.