

What you can do to soothe a colicky or fussing baby?



Since it is not known exactly what causes colic and fussing symptoms, and since there is no proven cure, there is no one single soothing strategy that works for every baby. So in tandem with reducing the amount of air swallowed while feeding, you might want to try some of the following methods below to see what best calms your baby:

- 1.** You may instinctively find yourself using movement to calm your colicky or fussy baby. Try carrying your baby around in different positions to see which offers the most relief: on your shoulder, cradled in your arms, lying along your forearm on their tummy.
- 2.** You could also try strapping your baby to you in a sling. A rocking chair can be useful too, with your baby on your lap or shoulder.
- 3.** Another movement-based technique is to take your baby out for a walk in their buggy or strap them in their car seat and go for a drive.
- 4.** Rhythmic sounds can also help comfort your baby as they are thought to remind babies of the noises that they heard in their mother's womb
- 5.** Sucking can help colic and fussing, so you might want to consider giving your baby a pacifier/ soother.
- 6.** Some colicky or fussy babies find warm baths particularly comforting.
- 7.** Gently massaging your baby's tummy may be calming and can help to dispel trapped wind.
- 8.** If you are breastfeeding, you might want to think about your diet. Certain foods you eat can make your baby's colic or fussing worse. Foods to watch out for include: citrus fruit, onions, cabbage, cauliflower, spicy foods, caffeine, beans and anything else that is known to cause wind.
- 9.** Bright lights, lots of people and sudden noise may further aggravate colic and fussing. Try taking your baby somewhere that provides less environmental stimulation.

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How can I tell what is working for my baby?

Having a colicky or fussy baby can make you very tired and stressed. In this state, it can be difficult to know what is working. One of the best ways to get a clear picture of what is going on with your baby is to keep a diary for a week. Each day, make a record of when your baby cries, the number of times, how long each episode lasts, how you tried to soothe your baby, how effective it was, and include the actual times when you gave your baby feeds. Once the week is out, read through the diary and decide whether anything appears to be helping and see where the correlation between feeding and crying lays. If nothing appears to be actively soothing your child, you may need extra support in finding solutions that do help or otherwise you may need to seek the help of a healthcare professional.

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What if I'm struggling to handle the situation?

If your baby is crying a great deal and can't be soothed you may begin to think that your own feelings are affecting your baby. Although research shows that parental anxiety does not cause colic or a fussy baby, being very stressed can make it more difficult to soothe your baby and for you both to rest. It's therefore important to look after yourself and find moments of calm. These suggestions might help:

- 1.** Take a break. When you've done all that you can, ask your partner, a family member or friend to take over for a while. Take advantage of all offers of help, so you can rest. Do not feel guilty; you need lots of rest too. Even an hour on your own can help renew your coping strength.
- 2.** Express your feelings. It's normal for parents in this situation to feel helpless, depressed or frustrated. Confide in your partner or close friend to ensure your feelings are out in the open.
- 3.** Try to stay positive. Don't measure your success as a parent by how much or how little your baby cries. The fact that you're trying to figure out what might help shows you're a wonderful, supportive and caring parent.
- 4.** Make healthy lifestyle choices. Eat healthy foods. Make time for exercise, such as a brisk daily walk. If you can, sleep when your baby sleeps, even during the day – do not feel guilty, you need as much rest as you can get.
- 5.** Remember that it's temporary. Colic and fussing episodes usually improve by three months of age.
- 6.** Recognize your limits. If your baby's crying is becoming unbearable, put the baby in a safe place such as a cot and go to another room to collect yourself. Make sure you speak to your partner and go back into the room a few minutes later.