

# Coping with Crying

TAKING CARE OF A BABY CAN BE FUN AND REWARDING. But when your baby won't stop crying, it can be upsetting for you and other caregivers. It is normal for your baby to cry. The average newborn cries two to three hours a day, and sometimes more. Sometimes it may seem like your baby never stops crying; and all parents find it hard to cope with non-stop crying.

- Crying happens most often in the evenings
- Crying may start or stop without any clear reason
- Crying may not stop no matter what you do
- Your baby's crying will not harm him or her



It may seem like your baby cries more than others, but **ALL babies cry a lot**. You can try the following things to help soothe your baby:

- Check your baby's basic needs: feed, burp or change your baby's diaper if needed
- Make sure your baby's clothing is not too tight, too hot, too cold, etc.
- Offer your baby a pacifier, but never force it

All babies cry, often without any known cause. If your baby is warm, dry and well-fed but still won't stop crying, try these tips for **soothing babies**:

- Gently rock your baby in a rocking chair or in your arms
- Softly pat your baby on the back
- Sing or talk softly to your baby
- Play soft music
- Take your baby for a walk in the stroller
- Give your baby a warm bath

Strategies to **handle your frustration** when your baby is crying:

- First, put your baby in a crib, make sure the baby is safe, and close the door; check on the baby every 5–10 minutes
- Take a bath or shower, exercise or play music
- Call a trusted friend, relative or neighbor and ask them to come over to watch the baby and give you a break
- Sit down, close your eyes and take 20 deep breaths
- Think about how much you love your baby

Dealing with a crying baby can be very stressful, but **NEVER SHAKE YOUR BABY!** Shaking a baby can cause blindness, brain damage or even death. If you are feeling overwhelmed, it is important to reach out for support. Ask a family member or trusted friend to watch the baby and give you a break.

## Soothe, Don't Shake Your Baby

Everyone who cares for your child should know about Shaken Baby Syndrome. Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) is one of the most common injuries causing death by physical abuse to infants in Florida. SBS occurs when a frustrated parent or other caregiver loses control and shakes a young child, causing permanent brain damage or death. Crying is the most common reason someone shakes a baby. The outcomes for survivors typically include cerebral palsy, blindness, deafness, seizures and learning/behavioral difficulties. Young males who care for a baby alone are most at risk to shake a baby. Everyone who watches your baby needs to know they should never shake your baby.

*Common signs and indicators that a baby has been shaken violently and may be suffering Shaken Baby Syndrome include:*

- Unable to turn head
- Extreme irritability, often misdiagnosed as colic
- Feeding problems or decreased appetite
- Inability to suck or swallow
- Vomiting
- Lethargy or poor muscle tone
- Inability to follow movements with eyes
- No smiling or vocalization (cooing, gurgling, etc.)
- Rigidity
- Seizures or convulsions; rolling of eyes upward into head
- Pale or bluish skin
- Coma or loss of consciousness
- Difficulty breathing
- Dilated pupils
- Blood spots/pooling of blood in eyes
- Bruises on shoulders, neck, ribs, upper arms, arms, wrists



**The most important thing you can do to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome is to understand your baby and how to cope with him when he cries or is irritable.**

The Florida Department of Health contributed to the content of this tip sheet. For more information, visit their website at [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov).

### HERE'S HELP



Use the **Family Resources on pages 91–95** to learn about a variety of family support services available in your community.