



The Period of **PURPLE** Crying

Starting at about two weeks of age, some babies begin crying more and may be hard to soothe. As a result, parents may feel guilty and angry if they aren't able to console them. The Period of Purple Crying explains that if the baby is not ill and parents have tried everything they can think of to soothe the baby, it is okay if they cannot stop their baby from crying. This is true even if the crying lasts for hours. Not being able to soothe an infant **does not** make mom and dad bad parents. Some babies are just going to cry. It will end, and life will return to normal.

The letters in **PURPLE** stand for the common parts of non-stop crying in infants:

- P** - peak pattern (crying peaks around 2 months, then decreases)
- U** – unpredictable (crying for long periods can come and go for no reason)
- R** - resistant to soothing (the baby may keep crying for long periods)
- P** - pain-like look on face
- L** - long bouts of crying (crying can go on for hours)
- E** - evening crying (baby cries more in the afternoon and evening)

How to Cope

Even if you know that non-stop infant crying is **not your fault**, crying can still be hard to cope with. The keys to getting through it are trying different things and having a plan.

Try Different Things—Basic Soothing Tips for a Fussy Baby

Feed Your Baby- The main reason babies cry is because they are hungry. A full tummy may be just what baby is looking for. Keep in mind that even adults sometimes get hungry before the next mealtime. So even if it hasn't been that long since your baby was fed, hunger may still be the cause of the crying.

Check Your Baby's Temperature- He may be fussing because he is not feeling well. Use a clean digital thermometer under the arm. If he is less than 3 months old and his temperature is above 100.4°F or if you think he is sick, call the doctor.

Hold Your Baby - This may be on your lap, in a sling, or against your chest—whatever is most comfortable for you and baby. Always remember to support your baby's head.

Cuddle, coo, read, sing. (P.S. Your baby doesn't know if you can't carry a tune—it's all music to his ears!)

Rock baby gently, walk around, dance slowly. Even if your baby doesn't stop crying, he will know you care and are there for him. A baby swing may work. Make sure you use one that rocks side to side and not front to back.

Check Your Baby's Diaper- Check to see if your baby has a dirty diaper. Babies should have between eight and ten wet diapers each day. Your baby may be crying to let you know it is time for a change. Also watch for diaper rash, which can make baby fussy. Ask your doctor what to use to treat diaper rash.

Check Your Baby's Clothes- Is something too tight? Is a tag rubbing baby's skin? Is baby too hot or too cool? Try taking off socks or putting on a little hat. Some babies feel better wrapped up securely in a light blanket.

Create "white noise"-Some babies like the sound of the vacuum cleaner or dishwasher. A radio or TV playing in the background may work, too.

Take Baby for a Walk-A change of scenery may help. It will probably help you to get out, too.

Have a Plan

Let Others Help You—Take friends and family up on their offers to watch the baby for a while. Use this time to get some work done, run an errand, or even take a nap. Do not feel bad about leaving your baby with someone for a couple of hours. Moms and Dads need some time for themselves as well.

Join a Play or Support Group—By getting together with others who have babies the same age, you can share stories and tips. Just seeing that you are not alone can be a big help. If you can't get to a group, perhaps you can find one or two other parents in your neighborhood who would like to get together. Call First Call for Help 211 (just dial 211) to get information about local groups that meet your needs (twins, stay-at-home moms, newcomers, etc.)

Take a Break—If nothing else works and you have no one to call on, put the baby in the cradle or crib and walk away. You need to take care of *you* before you can take care of the baby. Relax for a few minutes, calm down and regroup. Listen to some music, read, have a snack, do something else for a few minutes. A parent who is angry and upset may take it out on the baby. Remember, this is not your fault and it is not the baby's fault. It is just the way it is. **This stage will end!** Your baby will learn to smile and laugh and play. If you can be as comforting as possible through this difficult time, your baby will also learn that you are there for him no matter what.

Remember--Never Shake A Baby!