

Where to go for help and support if you are struggling to cope with your baby's crying

Babies can cry for reasons such as if they are hungry, tired, wet/dirty or if they are unwell. If you think there is something wrong with your baby or the crying won't stop speak to your GP, Midwife or Health Visitor.

- If you are worried that your baby is unwell call NHS 111.
- NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000 - Monday to Friday 8am – 10pm or 9am – 6pm at the weekends. (It's free and you don't have to say who you are)
- Visit ICON website's [page for parents](#)



What is ICON? The ICON Programme is a preventative programme, based around helping parents cope with a crying baby. The word 'ICON' represents the following message:

- I** – Infant crying is normal
- C** – Comforting methods can sometimes soothe the baby
- O** – It's OK to walk away
- N** – Never, ever shake a baby

What is our response

Research points to persistent crying in babies being a potential trigger for some parents/care givers to lose control and shake a baby. It also shows that around 70% of babies who are shaken are shaken by men.

Any prevention programme should include male caregivers and use the best opportunities to reach them as well as support all parents/caregivers with information about crying and how to cope with a crying baby.

Key Information

Comfort methods

can sometimes soothe the baby and the crying will stop. Is the baby hungry, tired or in need of a nappy change?



Never, ever shake or hurt a baby. It can cause lasting brain damage and death.

1 Talk calmly to your baby. Stroke them gently. Try placing your baby face down on your lap, or hold them against you and try stroking their back rhythmically.

2 Hum or sing to your baby. Let them hear a repeating, constant and soothing sound. Classical music, including piano and guitar, can sometimes soothe some babies.

3 Hold them close – skin to skin.

4 Go outside with your baby and walk them in a pram or in a baby sling. The rocking motion can be very soothing for a baby. If you can't go outside try a gentle rocking motion inside. Walk around whilst gently rocking your baby.

5 Sucking can help relieve a baby's distress. If offering the breast is not possible, a dummy can soothe a baby and can be given from 4 weeks onward for babies where breastfeeding is established or at any time if the baby is formula fed.

6 Try giving them a warm bath.

7 Stay calm, this phase will pass.

Not all of these will work all of the time but remember, that's OK.



What makes a baby vulnerable



What are the key messages of ICON?

- Crying is a normal part of child development
- All babies will cry a lot from the ages of 2 weeks to 3-4 months, but this can vary from baby to baby.
- Crying seems to peak in the late afternoon and early evening... but this can vary between babies.
- Crying is normal... all parents can feel stressed but babies are not doing this on purpose.
- Shaking a baby can cause significant injury and even death. Better to put you baby down safely and walk away for a few minutes if you are struggling.

The Curve of Early Infant Crying

A baby may start to cry more frequently at about 2 weeks of age. The crying may get more frequent and last longer during the next few weeks, hitting a peak at about 6 to 8 weeks. Every baby is different, but after about 8 weeks, babies start to cry less and less each week.



Barr, R (1990) The normal crying curve: What do we really know? *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology.*