



# Decode your infant's cry





# First day home

You just took your baby home from the hospital. Now, without the assistance of the nurses and doctors, you are in charge of taking care of your little one.

If something happens (which we hope will never happen), no nurses or doctors are rushing in the room to check on your baby. Instead, you have to bring him out and drive to the hospital.

Shit. I mean, damn.

I was scared shitless the first day I took my son home. Every time he cried, I didn't know what else to do. All I did was to carry him up and breastfeed him, hoping to solve the problem.

Sometimes he stopped crying, but sometimes he arched his back and cried louder. Sometimes I felt like he was trying to get away from me. Seeing him crying and didn't know what to do, I was heart-broken.



**But crying is not too bad.**

Crying is the first sound your little one made when he came to the world. A cry brings air to his lungs, it is the mark of completely stop eating and breathing through the belly cord and start doing everything on his own. And for the first few months, it is the only way your baby communicates with you.

On average, an infant cries about 1.5 hours a day, even though parents already meet all of his needs.

In the first 3 months, animal instinct is very strong in your baby. He can give very clear signs of his needs through his body language and cry.

However, during this time, if parents do not respond accurately or ignore these signs, this ability will go away. Then, all of the communication signs are left with one: cry out loud and parents have to figure out the reasons themselves.

By watching and explaining your baby's body language and decoding his cry, you can and will become an expert in understanding and connecting with your baby.



Remember, during this time, his cry is more like a reaction and he will not remember the main reasons for his cry or the pain he goes through.

However, it doesn't mean just let your baby cry like crazy without doing anything. In contrast, I believe if parents can wait for a few minutes, analyze and figure out the reasons for his cry, a little cry won't hurt him.

Parents' reaction is the most important factor when dealing with a crying baby. If parents calm, understand and react to babies' different cries, babies will smoothly transfer to a new form of communication with fewer tears involved (around week 12 and week 16). Your little one won't spend so much time crying, and easier to soothe him.

Crying in the infant is inevitable. However, if you can understand what he is trying to say, you can stop the crying quickly and bond with him.



**Some  
reasons  
why your  
baby is  
crying, and  
all the  
signs he is  
trying to  
tell you**

## **Your baby is tired or overtired, he needs to sleep.**

Early sign of tiredness is reduction of activity. Your baby seems to be a little inactive and doesn't have an interest in things. He stays silent, looks at one thing, some babies even have a squint. He rubs his eyes, scratches, and pulls his ears and the most obvious sign is yawning.

If parents see these signs before or with his cry, this is the sign of sleepiness. You have to put him to bed before he becomes cranky and overtired.

Overtired babies often wink, rub their eyes, sucking their lips (this is his sign of self-soothing by sucking, which can easily be misunderstood as hunger). If not being taken to bed, they can start kicking their legs, waving their arms, arching their backs, and scratching their faces, cheeks or ears hard.

## Your baby is tired or overtired, he needs to sleep.

If you carry your overtired baby, you will notice that he acts like trying to escape from your arms, with his head pushing toward you. His face reddens as he cries aloud.

The crying sound of a tired baby starts with irregular sniffing sounds, then bursts out a loud cry: 3 times sniffing then crying out loud, stopping for 2 short breaths then crying out louder and longer.

Without any interference, your baby will cry for a little while and fall asleep. Because sleeping is the only solution for tired, overtired, and sleepy babies.

Of all the crying sounds, the crying sound from tiredness can easily be misunderstood to be crying from hunger. Usually, your baby will get tired after playing time, exercising, or “talking” with adults. His moving and arching are quite similar to colic babies.

## Being overwhelming or overexcited, he needs to relax

When the environment is too noisy and too stimulating, everyone is trying to get the baby's attention: peekaboo, rattles, music videos, your baby might turn his head away or close his eyes and cry out loud, a similar cry to the overtiredness cry.

His hands and legs might move out of control, his head turns away from the light or sound or the person who is playing with him.

This is his reaction toward the overwhelming environment. The solution is to bring him into another environment: less light, less sound. Hold him tightly until he is relaxed.

## Being overwhelming or overexcited, he needs to relax

On the other hand, if your baby is overtired or sleepy and you carry him or swing him too much to soothe him to sleep, this sometimes can backfire on you and prevent your baby from sleeping.

Your baby will cry out loud, arching, and suffering. This is him saying “Leave me alone” or “I need to sleep”.

So depending on what your baby prefers, maybe with your baby swinging is not as effective as swaddling.



**He is bored. He wants to see different things.**

If your baby has been sitting on the bouncer for over 20 minutes while you talk or chat with friends, he is not tired, hungry, or uncomfortable due to dirty diapers but he starts whining and crying slightly.

He can turn away from the toys in front of him and starts playing with his fingers and whining. This is when you have to change the angle of the chair, change his position, or give him a new toy to look at and play with.

If none of these things work, your little one is likely tired and ready to go to sleep.

## He is gassy, in pain and he wants to burp.



He will release a sudden high pitched cry, more like a scream of a baby pain. He can cry loudly and long, so much that you feel like he cannot breathe. He stops to take a quick breath and continues to his high pitched cry.

You can see that his entire body tenses up, which can even worsen the pain. He can try to pull his knees close to his belly, frown and open his mouth to form the cry, his tongue curls up.

The fact is, all babies swallow some air during feeding, talking, blah blah-ing, and playing. This air will bloat your baby's tummy and make him very uncomfortable.

**He is gassy, in pain and he wants to burp.**



When hearing this type of cry, you have to check throughout your baby: checking his temperature, making sure he doesn't have diaper rash, and burping him carefully.

And remember to burp him after every feeding. If during the feed, you feel like your baby is getting uncomfortable with the air inside his tummy, stop the feeding and burp him.

**He is not comfortable. His diaper is wet. He is too hot, too cold.**

When he is not comfortable, he moves and arches his back, like he is trying to move away from the uncomfortable source in his body.

Being cold, he can cry intensely, have shaking lips, goosebumps, and his body trembles. His skin can turn to purple or blue being too cold. This can happen if you don't wrap your baby well after a shower or during winter.

Being hot, he releases an angry cry. He can cry at a low pitch for the first 5 minutes, then if he is still hot, he will cry like crazy. His face turns red, sweaty and you can even see red dots all over his face and body.

Measure his temperature and discover the source of his cry. Remove his clothes, take him a bath, and put him somewhere with ventilating air.



## ATTENTION



During summer, the temperature in a parked car without air conditioner increases 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit) within less than 10 minutes.

Therefore, no matter how rush you are and how fast you go, **NEVER LEAVE A BABY IN A PARKED CAR WITHOUT AIR CONDITIONER RUNNING DURING SUMMER, EVEN WITH A CRACKING WINDOW**, otherwise, you can put your baby's life in danger.

## He is sick



A soft and tired cry.  
You can notice his skin  
becomes soft and dry.

Get help from a doctor.  
Do not try to treat it  
without any  
consultation.

**He is desperate. He is lonely. He is scared. He is worried.**

When he first learns how to control his hands and feet, he will try to put his hands and feet into his mouth or try to grab a toy. However, he hasn't developed his motor skill just yet. His body cannot do what his brain tells it to do. He will become angry and cranky. He needs your help.

When you carry your baby to sleep and put him down to the crib after he is asleep. He might wake up crying because he misses the feeling of being carried in your arms and he doesn't like to be alone. He will need to get back to his familiar environment to continue his sleep.

When your baby is being carried by a stranger, he can turn from a happy baby to a scared baby. He will cry as a reaction. His cry is short, like the sound of a kitten. He can turn his head around to look for you. He is trying to tell you that he doesn't know that person and he needs you.

## He is hungry. He wants to eat.



He starts to lick his lips and tries to find the breast: he pushes his tongue out and turns his head to left and right, pulling his hands into his mouth. The hunger cry often starts with some deep “heh heh” from his throat and then quickly turns to a loud cry “neh neh”. Then it turns into a low-pitched, rhythmic, repetitive cry.

The best way to find out the root cause is to check his last feed. If he hasn't eaten for 3 – 4 hours, he just wakes up from his nap and gets a diaper change and still cries, a full feed will turn him from a cranky baby to a happy baby.

## He pee-pee or poo-poo



He starts pushing and crying. He can tense his body uncomfortably. If he pushes while drinking milk, he will stop sucking, his face reddens while he pushes and he cries it out loud then does his pee pee or poo poo.

Parents often get confused about this cry with the hunger cry. To help him get comfortable, make sure you give him some tummy time or exercise time after feeding.

# Overfeeding



Your baby cries even right after a feed. He can spit up or even vomit often.

This often happens when parents are confused between different types of cry and constantly feed their babies.

## Colicky babies



Colicky babies often cry fiercely during the witch-hour despite all parents' effort to soothe them. Sometimes swinging or white noise can help to relax a colicky baby, but if nothing can, you will have to wait it out.

Good thing is that Colic will lessen after 4 months and disappear when your baby is 6 months old.



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