

10 TIPS TO SOOTHE YOUR CRYING BABY

1. Shifting Positions

Parents tend to cradle a colicky baby face-up, but that may not help. Instead, hold her face down -- with your hand under her belly and her head on your forearm. The pressure on her tummy can help relieve uncomfortable gas.



2. Swaddling

To you, swaddling might feel like being in a straitjacket. But to a crying, fussy baby, it's like being back in the womb. How tight do you wrap this baby burrito? Snug enough so he can't wriggle his arms and legs free.



3. White Noise

A little white noise can help your baby feel like he's back in the womb. Recreate this soothing surrounding with white noise. Turn on a fan, put the bassinet near the dishwasher, run the vacuum, or tune a radio to static to provide constant, low-level sound.



4. Pacify Her

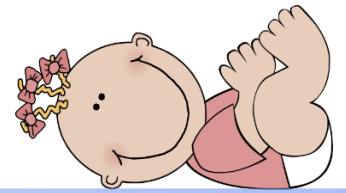
Infants have a strong sucking instinct, so a pacifier can calm your colicky baby. Bonus: Studies show binkies may help prevent sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).



5. Shhhh!

Making a shhh sound right in your colicky baby's ear may calm her down. Don't be timid -- make sure your baby can hear you over her own racket.





6. Take a Ride

Babies in the womb get used to a lot of motion. Get your baby moving and he may go right to sleep. Put him in a swing. Cradle him in a rocking chair. Lay him in a vibrating infant seat. You might even set out for a drive in the car, but don't hit the road if you're too tired.



7. Baby Massage

The soothing power of your own touch can work wonders on a colicky baby. Many babies love skin-to-skin contact. And studies show infants who are massaged seem to cry less and sleep better. Just undress your baby and use slow, firm strokes over her legs, arms, back, chest, and face. It may calm you down as well.



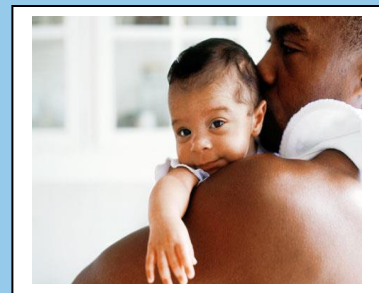
8. Wear Your Baby

In many cultures, infants spend much of the day in slings on their mothers' backs or chests. When you put a colicky baby in a sling or carrier, he can snuggle close and -- with luck -- may be lulled to sleep by your movement. Slings can also give your aching arms a rest or free a hand to fix a sandwich.



9. Burping

A crying baby can gulp down a lot of air. That can make her gassy and bloated -- and make her crying worse. Burp her with gentle thumps on her back. The classic position -- with the baby's head over your shoulder -- works, but can leave a trail of spit-up down your back. Switch things around: Lay your baby face down across your lap, or sit her up. Let one of your arms support her chest and neck.



10. Take a Breather

Night after night with a colicky baby is hard on parents. It's normal to feel overwhelmed, frustrated, and not up to the job. If nothing seems to work, take a break. Hand the baby off to your spouse or a family member. When that's not an option, remember that it's OK to let your baby cry in the crib for a little bit while you collect yourself.

See the Doctor

If you're concerned about your baby's crying, take him to the doctor. Your pediatrician can give you guidance and rule out any medical causes. Odds are there's no special reason. Some babies are just more prone to cry than others. So the next time your baby's wails make you wince, remember two things: It's not your fault, and it won't be like this forever.

Mary Beth Cyliax, RN, CCM 314-652-8175 ext. 310