

## THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SOOTHING YOUR BABY

What to do	How to do it	Why it works	Keep in mind
CHECK ON BASIC NEEDS	Look for clues to the problem. Is your baby opening her mouth? She may be hungry. Is her diaper wet? She may need to be changed. Is she rubbing her eyes? This is a sign of fatigue	A baby usually cries to indicate she's uncomfortable – hungry, tired, wet or gassy. The tears frequently subside once you give her what she needs.	If your baby has outbursts of inconsolable crying, awakens shrieking and cannot resettle, or is unable to sleep for one three-hour stretch at night, contact your pediatrician.
SWADDLE	On a receiving blanket, hold your infant's forearm straight against his right side. With your free hand, pull the fabric from his right shoulder down and across his body. Repeat on the left side.	Swaddling provides security and comfort and keeps babies from hitting themselves. When you restrain their movements, they focus on your soothing attempts, not on what was bothering them.	Since it limits their movement, swaddling is best only for newborns. The key to successful swaddling is tight wrapping. A loose blanket will pop back open and can pose a breathing hazard.
OFFER SOMETHING TO SUCK	Give your baby a pacifier or your clean knuckle to suck on (your fingernail may have bacteria underneath it).	Babies may receive instinctive comfort from sucking even when they're not hungry because many of them start sucking their thumb or other fingers in the womb.	Use this method only after you've successfully established breast or bottle feeding. For most breastfed infants, this is around six weeks; with bottle-fed infants, wait three to four weeks.
TRY DIFFERENT HOLDING POSITIONS	Put your baby over your shoulder, or try what pediatrician William Sears, M.D., calls the "colic curl." Slide your baby down your chest and cradle your hands under his bottom, tilting his legs up slightly.	Agitated babies often arch their backs or tense their stomach muscles. Changing positions moves them out of these postures, and the close contact with your body calms them down.	Fathers can also try the neck nestle. Snuggle your baby's head against the front of your neck and hum a low-pitched melody. The vibration of Dad's deep voice may lull a tense infant to sleep.
KEEP MOVING	Place your infant in a cradle, baby swing, sling, or front carrier and rock her. Take her for a car ride, or strap her in a bouncy seat on a clothes dryer as you stand beside her.	Gentle, rhythmic movements and vibration are comforting to infants because they are similar to what fetuses experience in the womb.	Rock your baby at the same rate as your heartbeat (60-100 rocks per minute). With the car ride technique, put her in a car seat and drive for 20 minutes or so. Carry her back into the house in her car seat.
MASSAGE	Place your baby on a flat surface such as a bassinet or a changing table, and apply a natural, cold-pressed fruit or vegetable oil. Gently stroke your baby's skin and knead his muscles.	Baby massage calms your infant because of the skin-to-skin contact, which can result in improved sleep, less fussing and gas, and better breastfeeding.	Parents benefit, too, as infant massage causes them to relax as well.
PROVIDE SOOTHING SOUNDS	Hum a lullaby or have your baby listen to white noise—a vacuum cleaner, hair dryer, or fan. You can also buy CDs or sound machines that play a range of white noise selections.	Musical rhythm is regular and steady, so it lulls infants to sleep. And the whirring sound of white noise mimics what they heard in-utero.	Lullabies work well for babies 2 months and older, who can begin to associate music with sleep. White noise is best for calming newborns as it can be heard over their crying.

**EXPERT SOURCES:** Pediatrician Harvey Karp, M.D., author of *The Happiest Baby on the Block*; child psychologist Penelope Leach, Ph.D., author of *Your Baby & Child*; Richard Saphir, M.D., clinical professor of pediatrics at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City; pediatrician William Sears, M.D., author of *The Fussy Baby Book*; Marc Weissbluth, M.D., founder of the Sleep Disorders Center at the Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago.

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