

# Crying and Colic or Extreme Fussiness

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All babies cry. Some cry a lot, some cry a little. In most cases, your baby is crying for a reason – she wants to eat, be changed, or be held. Crying is the only way your baby has to communicate with you, and if your baby is crying because he needs something, it is important to meet that need.

On the extreme side, some babies have what is often called **colic or extreme fussiness**. This occurs in 1 out of every 5 (20%) babies. Extreme fussiness is often defined as fussing at least 3 hours a day, 3 or more days a week. These awful episodes usually occur around the same time of the day, and the baby seems to be in a lot of discomfort. During this time the baby will be very difficult to console.

There are many theories about the cause of extreme fussiness. Most experts agree that these babies are easily over stimulated. The crying causes the baby to swallow extra air resulting in excess gas and belly pain.

Studies show that the following do not cause colic:

- Age of the mother
- First time mother
- Illness during pregnancy
- Allergies
- Sex of the baby
- Weight gain
- Breast milk not being rich enough
- Method of feeding (breast vs. bottle)
- Amount of stool per day
- Spitting up
- Education of the mother
- Tension or stress in the mother or family

I was blessed with a baby who had extreme fussiness. The amount of “helpful information” given to me by well meaning family members, friends, and total strangers in the check-out line at Target was overwhelming and very frustrating. Here are some suggestions on how to soothe your fussy baby. These may all work at different times and on different days. No day is predictable when you have a baby with extreme fussiness.

- Rhythmic motions (cradle, swing, rocking, car rides)
- Gentle pressure (swaddling, sleeping in a car seat, baby carrier)
- Infant Massage
- Sucking

This can be an extremely trying time for new parents. It is very important that mothers of babies with extreme fussiness get a break every day. Enlist the help of your husband, family, and friends to help get you out of the house.

Do not forget the following when dealing with extreme fussiness:

- Your baby is healthy
- This is not your fault
- It will disappear at around 3 months age
- Do not take out your frustrations on the baby.

If you are concerned that you have a baby with extreme fussiness, take him to the doctor for an exam. A physical cause for prolonged crying or fussiness could be the problem, and may need to be addressed.

Here are some helpful resources with more information:

Sweet Baby, by Marc Weissbluth, MD or [www.sweetBabies.com](http://www.sweetBabies.com)

Focus on the Family Complete Book of Baby and Child Care, by Focus on the Family  
Caring for Your Baby and Young Child, by the American Academy of Pediatrics