

Newborn Cries & Cues Cheat Sheet

Common Newborn Cries

- Hunger: Rhythmic, low-pitched cries. May suck hands or turn head to root.
- Tired: Fussy, whiny cry. May rub eyes, yawn, or stare into space.
- Discomfort: Grunts, wriggles, or sharp cries. Check nappy, clothing, temperature.
- Pain or Colic: Intense, high-pitched cries. Pulling legs to chest, hard to soothe.
- Overstimulated: Escalating cries, arching back, turning head away.

Baby Body Language Cues

- Clenched fists: Hunger or distress
- Jerky movements: Startled or overtired (Moro reflex)
- Arching back: Discomfort, wind or reflux
- Gaze aversion: Overstimulated or needing a break
- Yawning, slow blinking: Sleepy signs
- Rooting/sucking hands: Hungry or seeking comfort

Signs of Colic

- Crying more than 3 hours a day, at least 3 days a week
- Hard to soothe, usually worse in the evening
- Baby pulls up legs, clenches fists, looks in pain

Soothing Tips

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- Try white noise, motion, swaddling, or a dummy
- Burp well during and after feeds
- Use anti-colic bottles if bottle feeding
- Hold baby upright after feeds
- Massage tummy or use bicycle legs
- Shh Method: Make a loud, steady "shhhh" sound near baby's ear to mimic womb noise and trigger calming reflex

Always contact your HV or GP if you are unsure, baby has a fever, isn't feeding well, or has unusual symptoms.

You are doing great - babies cry to communicate, not to test you!