



STOP!

Babies cry (on average) 2-3 hours per day.

Excess crying is defined as >3 hours/day for >3 days/week. Regardless of definitions, at least 1/5th of all parents say their otherwise healthy baby cries excessively. Many struggle to find help. A cycle of anxiety can ensue. Advice often varies. As such a **considered** and **compassionate** approach is required to...

1. Exclude serious pathology

2. Safety net the baby's welfare

3. Provide accurate advice

Whilst most scenarios are benign (95%) needing no tests, parent fears must be heard. Balancing reassurance against not missing serious illness or early psychosocial stress.



LOOK 10 Step Assessment to the Crying Baby

- 1 **Perform a thorough history & exam** e.g. perinatal history, sepsis risk factors.
- 2 **Establish no serious underlying cause (<5%)** e.g. serious bacterial infection, hair tourniquet, hernia, torticollis, urinary infection (*consider urine testing*).
- 3 **Assess / refer for feeding problems** Check technique, position, latch, teat, milk preparation, tongue tie, cleft palate, inappropriate supplementation with water etc.
- 4 **Assess / refer for perinatal mental health** Check psychosocial risk factors, screen for postnatal depression, consider safeguarding issues, are they coping?
- 5 **Provide sensitive reassurance and advice** Relaxed cue-based care, safe sleep practice, physical contact (skin to skin), soothing techniques, massage etc.
- 6 **If signs of cow's milk allergy** A two-week trial of extensively hydrolysed formula or the elimination of dairy from breastfeeding mothers' diet may help.
- 7 **Avoid unnecessary medications** Poor evidence colic or reflux medication helps.
- 8 **If caregivers ever feel like harming baby** Advise them to put baby safely down, walk away, take a minute and if needed get help.
- 9 **Encourage seeking help/other caregivers** e.g. family, friends if at all available.
- 10 **Refer and or follow the case up closely** Know your local health services, breastfeeding drop in, lactation consultant, parent groups, charities & websites.

LEARN

FURTHER READING: Why do babies cry? (Scott-Jupp R); Fifteen-minute consultation: Troublesome crying in infancy (McKenzie SA); Managing infants who cry excessively in the first few months of life (Douglas Pamela, Hill Peter). **RESOURCES FOR PARENTS:** > cry-sis.org.uk > purplecrying.info > copingwithcrying.org.uk > unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/support-for-parents