

Overview of unsettled & crying babies

Ngā pēpi e hurihuri ana, e tangi ana hoki

Important

If you are worried about your baby's crying or general health, or you are finding it hard to cope yourself, make an appointment with your general practice team or WellChild provider. For example, if the sound of the crying changes, your baby is not feeding, or they seem to be miserable or unwell.

It's common for babies to be unsettled. For example, they might have long periods of crying and fussing, not wanting to be soothed, or spilling up milk. They might have problems with getting to sleep or wake frequently in the night.

Although this is normal behaviour, it can make you feel worried or anxious that you can't soothe or comfort your baby. You might even feel fed up and angry.



Some babies spill up a lot, some get unhappy when they spill and will cry and take time to settle afterwards. This is normal too.

As long as your baby is growing well, you don't have to worry.

Normal crying

- It's normal for a 6-week-old baby to cry for up to two hours a day.
- Most babies start crying more after 2 weeks of age, but this should improve by about 4 to 5 months.
- Crying is usually worse in the late afternoon or evening.
- Most crying is not caused by tummy problems, wind, or pain.

For more information about normal crying, see *What can you do when your baby cries?* (go to <https://www.kidshealth.org.nz/> and search for "crying".)



Helping your baby get settled

There are some things you can do to help settle and comfort your baby. They include being smokefree, soothing and settling your baby, and helping your baby feed and sleep well. It's also important to take care of yourself – you can't help your baby if you are stressed and overworked.

Important

If the crying is getting too much for you, put your baby in a safe place, such as their cot, take a few minutes to calm yourself and go back and check on your baby. If you ever feel that you may harm or shake your baby, ask for urgent help. Ring a friend, neighbour, partner, family member, or health professional urgently.

Getting help with an unsettled baby

Talk to your general practice team, Well Child provider, or midwife for advice.

Plunket can provide support and assistance. You can call PlunketLine **0800-933-922** free 24 hours a day, for child health and parenting questions.

Parenting support is available through several groups to find groups, go to www.healthinfo.org.nz and search for “support for parents”.

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