The building blocks of infant safe sleep

Soothing a Crying Baby & Safe Sleep

Having a new baby can be a wonderful time, but it can also be challenging. Babies cry, sometimes a lot. Babies usually cry the most between 2 and 4 months of age.

THE CRYING WON'T LAST FOREVER!

Check the regular things first. Be sure your baby has been fed, burped, and changed.

DOES BABY HAVE A DIRTY DIAPER?

Some babies let you know right away when they need to be changed.

IS BABY HUNGRY?

If baby gets too hungry, they can become fussy and can be difficult to calm and feed.

LEARN EARLY HUNGER SIGNS:

- Opening and closing the mouth.
- Sucking on hands or moving them to their mouth.
- Rooting, when baby is searching for food and moving head or opening mouth.

DOES BABY NEED TO BURP?

Babies swallow air when they breastfeed or suck from a bottle. If the air is not released, it may cause pain.

HOW TO BURP BABY:

- Hold baby against your chest with their chin resting on your shoulder. Gently rub or pat baby's back.
- Place baby on your lap, supporting their chest and head with one hand. Use your other hand to gently rub or pat their back.

IS BABY SLEEPY?

Instead of falling asleep, some babies may fuss and cry, especially if they are overly tired. Learn the signs that they are getting sleepy:

- Rubbing eyes and/or ears.
- Making fast jerky movements.
- Yawning or closing hands into fists.

DOES BABY WANT TO BE HELD?

Babies need a lot of cuddling. One way to hold baby is to do skin-to-skin care.

- Skin-to-skin care is when baby is wearing just a diaper and placed on a parent's bare chest.
- Always make sure you are awake and alert when practicing skin-to-skin care.
- Skin-to-skin care lowers stress levels for you and your baby.

IS BABY NOT FEELING WELL?

- Check baby's temperature to rule out a fever.
- If baby's crying just does not sound right, or if you think baby might be sick, trust your instincts and call baby's health care provider.

IS BABY'S TUMMY UPSET?

- Gas, colic, or allergies can cause stomach pain.
- Apply pressure by lightly placing your hand on baby's belly or gently move their legs in a bicycle motion to relieve pain.
- If you think baby's discomfort has something to do with what baby eats, check with baby's health care provider.

ARE PEOPLE SMOKING OR VAPING AROUND BABY?

- Keep baby's environment smoke-free and nicotine-free.
- Babies exposed to smoke can be more colicky.
- Smoke or vape outside or try to quit.
- Go to the Michigan Tobacco Quitlink (**Michigan.gov/Quitlink**) for help quitting.

IS YOUR BABY TOO HOT OR TOO COLD?

- Dress baby for the space they are in. If you think baby is cold, dress them in a footed sleeper with a sleep sack.
- Remove extra clothing if baby is too warm. Signs that baby may be too warm include damp hair, sweaty neck, back or chest that is hot to the touch, red or discolored ears or face.

IS YOUR BABY TEETHING?

- On average, the first tooth breaks through between 4 and 7 months of age.
- Provide a clean cool cloth or cold teether for baby to suck.

IS YOUR BABY OVERSTIMULATED OR UNDERSTIMULATED?

- Crying can be baby's way of saying, "I've had enough." Remove baby from loud noises or bright lights.
- Crying can also mean "I'm bored." Change baby's environment.
- Listen to music, dance or go for a walk.

ARE THERE OTHER THINGS GOING ON WITH BABY?

- Babies can be troubled by something as hard to spot as a hair wrapped tightly around their toe or finger.
- Some babies are extra-sensitive to things like scratchy clothing tags, fabrics, or how they are held.

WHAT OTHER THINGS CAN YOU TRY TO SOOTHE BABY?

- Sucking can help calm baby. Offer your breast, a pacifier, or a clean finger to suck.
- Play music, sing a lullaby, or try white noise.
- Get some fresh air.
- Rock baby in your arms or in a chair – put baby in their crib if you feel sleepy.
- Talk softly to baby.
- Stroke baby's cheek or gently pat baby's back.
- Keep baby close by placing their bassinet or pack and play in your room near your bed – that way you can soothe quickly when needed.

HOW TO COPE WITH A CRYING BABY:

- Have a friend or relative care for baby so you can take a break.
- If you become angry or frustrated with baby, take a deep breath and gently lay baby on the back in their crib or pack and play.
- Check out additional resources on the Period of Purple Crying Website **(URL: Dontshake.org/Purple-Crying).**

For all sleep times, day and night:

- Place baby on the back.
- Place baby in a crib, bassinet, pack and play with a firm mattress and tightly-fitted sheet. Baby's sleep surface should be flat.
- Keep stuffed animals, pillows, blankets, and other soft objects out of baby's sleep space.
- Keep baby's sleep space near your bed.

These guidelines apply to healthy, full-term infants.
For specific questions about your baby, ask your pediatrician or health care provider.

Learn more about safe sleep at **Michigan.gov/SafeSleep**.

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MDHHS-Pub 1195 (Rev. 7-25)