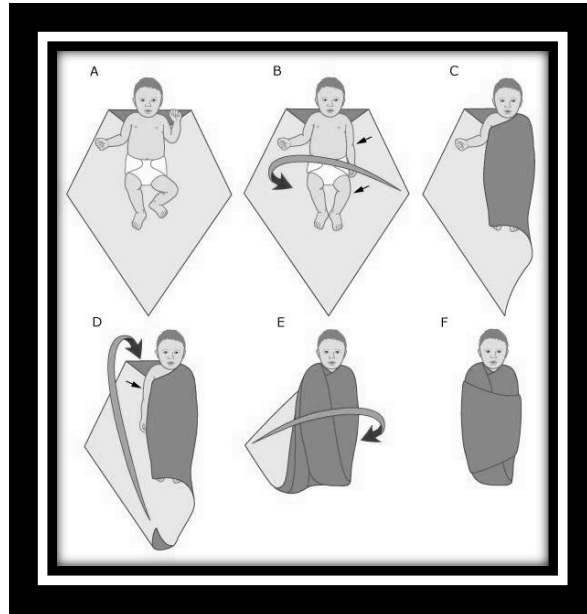


Fussy Tips and Techniques

Swaddling

To you, being swaddled might feel like being straitjacketed. But to a crying and fussy baby, swaddling feels like the cramped, familiar, and comforting womb. Often one of the biggest questions parents have when it comes to swaddling is: "How tight?" Answer: Snug enough so he can't wriggle his limbs free and flail.



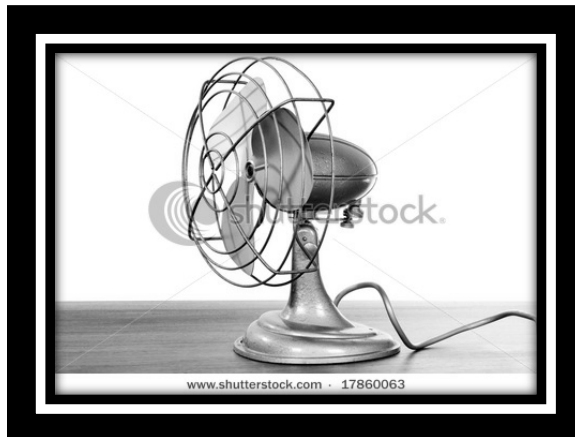
Shifting Positions

If you've been cradling your fussy baby face-up and it isn't helping, try another position. Holding your baby facing down -- with your hand under her belly and her head on your forearm -- may soothe her. The pressure on her tummy can help relieve uncomfortable gas.



White Noise

Try recreating the soothing womb environment with white noise. Turn on a fan, put the bassinet near the dishwasher, run the vacuum, or tune a radio to static to provide constant, low-level sound.



Pacify Her

Infants have a powerful sucking instinct, so see if a pacifier calms your colicky baby. Also, studies have found that pacifiers may help prevent sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).



Shushing

Shushing directly in the ear of your colicky baby may really calm him down. Although you may begin by shushing gently and calmly, experts say don't be timid. Shush loudly so your baby can hear you over his own crying.



Take a Ride

Babies in the womb get used to a lot of motion. Mimic that by keeping baby moving to get her to sleep. Put her in a swing. Cradle her in a rocking chair. Hold her car seat on a vibrating dryer (never leave her alone, because she might fall). Driving your colicky baby around in the car might work too, but beware of driving if you're exhausted.



Baby Massage

Don't neglect the soothing power of your own touch on a colicky baby. Many babies love skin-to-skin contact. And studies have found that babies who are massaged seem to cry less and sleep better. Just undress your baby and use slow, firm strokes over her legs, arms, back, chest, and face. It may calm you down as well.



Wearing Your Baby

In many cultures, infants spend much of the day hanging in slings on their mothers' backs or chests. When you put your colicky baby in a sling or carrier, he gets to snuggle close and -- with luck -- may be lulled to sleep by your movement. Slings can also give your aching arms a rest or free a hand to fix a sandwich.

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Burping

A crying baby can gulp down a lot of air. That can make him gassy and uncomfortable, making his crying worse. Try burping with gentle thumps on his back. The classic position -- with baby's head over your shoulder -- works but can leave spit-up trickling down your back. Other methods: lying him face down across your lap, or sitting up with one of your arms supporting his chest and neck.



Taking a Breather

Consoling a fussy baby night after night is terribly hard. You're bound to feel overwhelmed, inadequate, and frustrated. If nothing seems to work, take a break. Hand your baby off to your spouse or a family member. When that's not an option, remember that it's OK to let your baby cry in the crib for a little bit while you collect yourself.



Seeing the Doctor

If you're concerned about your baby's crying, take him to the doctor. A pediatrician can give guidance and rule out any medical causes. But odds are there's no special reason. Some babies are just more prone to crying than others. So the next time your baby is wailing and you're wincing, remember two things: It's not your fault and it won't be like this forever.



“Throw out the myths, preconceptions, and all the bad advice and get to know your baby as an individual, as a person. The baby will tell you what he or she likes and dislikes.” - Dr. Barry Lester