

Soothing Your Baby

Some babies have more difficulty calming themselves and may benefit greatly from techniques that mimic the time they spent in the uterus.

Babies may be fussy in the first three months of life due to hunger. If so, it is important to feed your baby well. Other babies may be fussy due to a digestive problem, such as an overabundant milk supply, a food sensitivity, or reflux (spitting up). Many fussy babies benefit from a little calming assistance from their parents.

Dr. Harvey Karp, a pediatrician, has identified five actions that appear to help babies who seem fussy with no apparent physical cause. He aims to duplicate the sensations of the uterus and trigger a powerful response in the baby's brain – what he refers to as **“the calming reflex.”**

Inside the uterus, babies are very snug. They experience continuous movement, hear a constant rhythmical heartbeat, and suckle as they please. If your baby seems to have difficulty calming, Dr. Karp suggests the 5 S's:

- **Swaddle your baby.** Swaddling keeps a baby's arms close to their body when they are on their back. This prevents triggering the Moro (or falling) reflex, which can awaken a baby or make a baby feel insecure. A swaddled baby should be placed to sleep on their back (not on their stomach or side) and should sleep alone (not in a bed with other people). Once your baby is trying to roll over, do not swaddle your baby. Instead you may want to transition your baby to a sleep bag with their arms free. **All babies, but especially a baby who is swaddled, should be kept in close proximity to a parent or caregiver when they are asleep.** See our diagram on *Swaddling Your Baby* for additional information.
- **Hold your baby in a side position.** Again, this position may make a baby feel more secure.
- **Gently swing or rock your baby in your arms.**
- **“Shoosh”** your baby with a rhythmical sound.
- **Let your baby suckle frequently** (either at the breast, on a finger or a pacifier).

Do pacifiers cause problems with breastfeeding? If your baby is hungry and wants to suckle, it is important to feed your baby. Pacifiers are not necessary for all babies. However, if your baby is gaining weight well, you may decide to use a pacifier if it helps to calm your baby. See our information on *Pacifiers*.

Don't give up after the first try! The 5 S's may establish a routine that helps your baby to calm.

Dr. William Sears, another pediatrician, believes that babies benefit from being held close and nursed frequently. Dr. Sears claims that “wearing” your baby results in a more content baby. Both Dr. Sears and Dr. Karp point to cultures in which babies cry very little. **These babies are held close and carried by an adult most of the day.** Many child development experts confirm that meeting a young baby's needs promptly tends to produce children and adults who are more secure and content.

For more information, you may want to read:

- The Happiest Baby on the Block by Harvey Karp, MD
- The Fussy Baby Book by William Sears, MD and Martha Sears, RN

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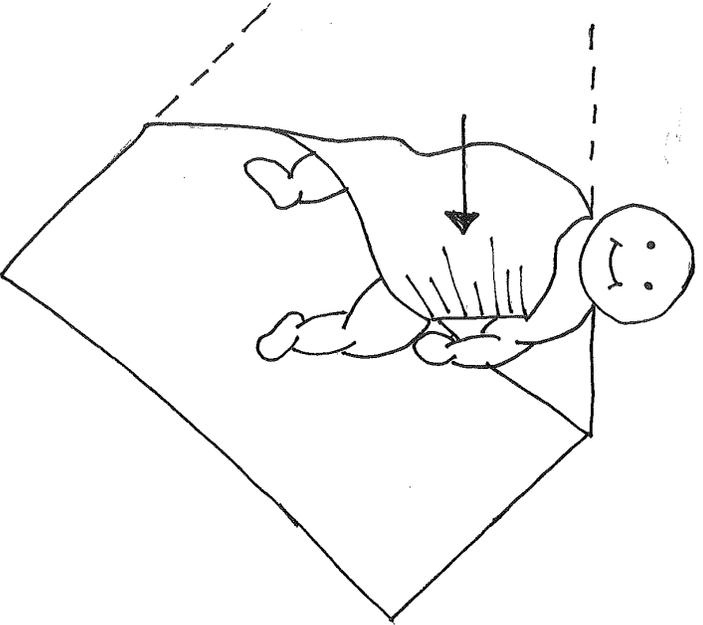
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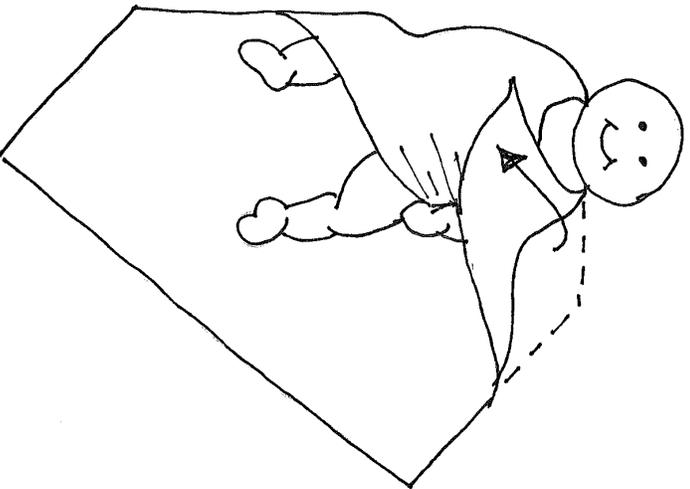


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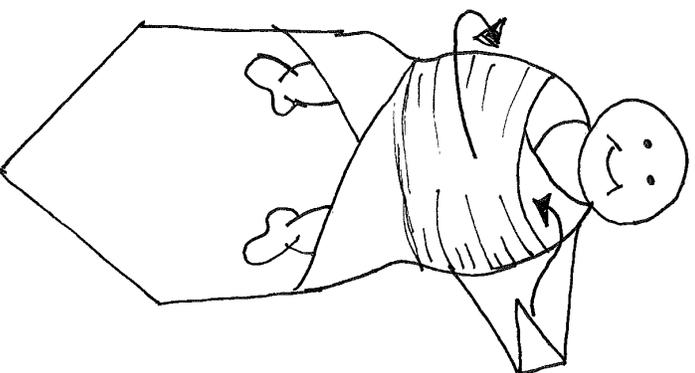
Swaddling Your Baby



Hold baby's right arm snugly against his/her side and firmly wrap blanket around baby's body. Tuck swaddle blanket snugly under baby's body to anchor the blanket.



Hold baby's left arm snugly against his/her side and bring the upper edge of the blanket down across baby's left shoulder.



Continue to hold baby's left arm close to his/her body and snugly wrap the blanket around baby's upper body. Tuck the loose end into an edge of the wrapped blanket. The weight of baby's body will help hold the swaddle blanket in place.

Baby's legs should NOT be tightly wrapped with baby's thighs pressed together and legs straight.

Allow room for baby's hips and thighs to move.

Once your baby is trying to roll over to his or her stomach, discontinue swaddling your baby. You may consider using a sleep bag instead.