



BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN INFANTS

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During early infancy, common issues include crying and night waking. During the second half of infancy, additional issues include repetitive rocking movements, fears, and clinging behaviors. More problematic behaviors, include colic and protracted nighttime struggles.

Crying and fussy periods

The majority of healthy babies experience daily periods of crying for which there is no explanation. By 6 weeks, the duration of daily crying peaks to 3 hours. Crying then diminishes gradually, so that by 3 months, the average duration is 1 hour per day.

Parents should be encouraged to respond to their infant's cry, be assured that a young infant cannot be "spoiled," and understand that most babies need cuddling during both fussy and nonfussy times. Young infants who are more frequently carried will cry less.

Teaching the baby to become a "self-calmer" (eg, helping the infant to find his thumb) may be helpful. When parents find that their routine fails to soothe the baby, they should be given permission to "put the baby down to cry for a few minutes" before reinitiating their attempts.

Strategies to Manage Fussy Periods During Early Infancy

Actions that Reduce the Amount of Crying and Fussing

1. Carry and cuddle frequently during both fussy and non-fussy periods.
2. Respond promptly to baby's cry, and do not worry about "spoiling" the infant.
3. Help the baby to become a self-soother. Example: Help baby to find his own thumb.

Routine Responses that May Soothe Babies

1. Pick up baby.
2. Change diaper if soiled.
3. Cuddle.
4. Offer feeding if last feeding was more than 2 hours ago.
5. Burp.
6. Offer a pacifier.
7. Check to see that baby is neither too hot nor too cold and that clothing or diaper is not constricting.
8. Place baby in a swing or crib rocker or carry in a front pack.
9. Turn on music or heart beat simulator.
10. Go for a walk.
11. Put baby in crib and allow to cry and fuss.
12. Repeat routine.