

## **USE "S"s TO HELP SOOTHE YOUR BABY**

Dr. Harvey Karp, in his book "The Happiest Baby on the Block" has taught parents about the five "S's" – swaddling, sucking, sshhing, side-lying, and swinging. These are all very helpful as you search for ways to comfort and soothe your baby. The Mount Zion Pediatricians would like to add to Dr. Karp's list.

### **1. Sunshine.**

You may have heard your grandmother or older relatives telling you, "That baby needs some fresh air". Grandma was probably right as there is some research that indicates infants do less crying when they have been outdoors in the sunlight.

### **2. Stomach pressure**

Babies really seem to appreciate gentle pressure on their tummies. You have probably noticed that your baby likes it when you hold him upright with his tummy against your chest or your shoulder. Babies also often enjoy having a soft massage of their abdomen as you use gentle circular motions.

### **3. Skin to skin**

Infants love to snuggle next to their parents in "skin to skin" mode.

### **4. Supplement with probiotics**

Some newer research is also indicating that when infants (or their mothers who are breastfeeding) take probiotics the infant has less crying. So, you may want to consider this if your baby is fussy or seems to have lots of gas.

### **5. Survival mode**

It is important to remember that as a parent you are often in "survival mode" during the first few months after your baby's birth. Sometimes it is ok to just do what is necessary for survival – feeding yourself and your baby, changing the baby – and sleeping when your baby is sleeping.

### **6. Sanity**

Try to remember – "This too will pass". But it may be helpful to ask a friend or relative to help care for your baby so you can have a break.

### **7. Sleep**

When babies become overly tired, they often become quite fussy. Instead of falling asleep easily, they tend to become more fussy and irritable. If your baby has been awake for longer than 20 minutes after his feeding is finished, help prevent your baby from becoming overly tired by offering him the opportunity to fall asleep in a quiet, dark place.

**8. Stimulation** Babies can also become fussy when they are overstimulated. Infants are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling so many new things after they are born that it is easy for them to become overwhelmed with all this new information. Just seeing your face or hearing your voice is enough stimulation for a new baby. Don't think you have to do anything else at this time to help her learn.

### **9. Solitude / Separation**

*If your baby is crying and you have tried everything you can think of to soothe and comfort her, but your baby is still crying, consider thinking of this last option – solitude. Maybe your baby is overly tired or overly stimulated and may need the opportunity to release all this built up tension.*

Place your swaddled baby in a quiet, dark room in a safe place and allow her to cry for just a few minutes. This may allow her to decompress and release all the tension so that she can fall asleep. After 5 – 10 minutes go back into her room. Many times your baby will have fallen asleep and can now sleep peacefully. If your baby is still crying, then you can try all the soothing techniques again as your baby may respond better this time.

*There is one "S" that you should never use. Remember – NEVER SHAKE YOUR BABY. If you are feeling overwhelmed and are concerned you might shake or hurt your baby, please call 441-KIDS for nonjudgmental support.*