



ACT
Government
Health

In November 2016 ACT Maternity Services will be introducing a parent education programme, *The Period of PURPLE Crying*®, to all parents of infants born in the ACT. The programme has been developed to increase caregivers' understanding of infant crying during the first few months and hence reduce the incidence of abusive head trauma (shaken Baby Syndrome):

PURPLE is an acronym used to describe the characteristics of normal infant crying.

THE LETTERS IN PURPLE STAND FOR

P

PEAK OF CRYING

Your baby may cry more each week, the most in month 2, then less in months 3-5

U

UNEXPECTED

Crying can come and go and you don't know why.

R

RESISTS SOOTHING

Your baby may not stop crying no matter what you try.

P

PAIN-LIKE FACE

A crying baby may look like they are in pain, even when they are not.

L

LONG LASTING

Crying can last as much as 5 hours a day, or more.

E

EVENING

Your baby may cry more in the late afternoon and evening.

THE WORD PERIOD MEANS THAT THE CRYING HAS A BEGINNING AND AN END

All parents of newborns will be given a booklet, which contains either a DVD or a code for down loading an App which can be loaded onto 6 devices. The DVD and App have two videos. The 10 minute Purple Crying video explains the characteristics of infant crying and how frustration induced by infant crying may lead to shaking or hurting the infant. Another 17 minute video, *Crying, Soothing, Coping: Doing What Comes Naturally*, provides practical advice for parents to help them soothe their babies as well as helping parents to recognise and manage their reactions to persistent crying. Parents are encouraged to show the video to anyone who looks after their baby. Parents are also advised to seek medical care to exclude health problems that may be causing the infant crying. The accompanying booklet summarises the main messages of the videos.

The Period of PURPLE Crying®, is research based and developed by Canadian paediatrician Dr of Ronald G. Barr, MDCM, FRCPC. It has been introduced in many states in

North America and in Australia it has been introduced in northern Queensland, in a remote and largely aboriginal community.

The Period of PURPLE Crying® is delivered in three “doses”. In the ACT the first “dose” will be prior to discharge from hospital or by the Midcall nurse at the first home visit. The parents are asked to view the video and then the midwife discusses it with the parents. The second “dose” is reinforcement of the message that “babies can still be healthy and normal even if they cry five hours per day” and the “the crying will come to an end.” This will be delivered by health professionals seeing the infant during the first 3 months of life: Maternal and Child Health [MACH] Nurses, child and family workers at the Child and Family Centres, paediatricians, general practitioners and practice nurses. The third “dose” is a public health campaign which is designed to ensure that all members of the community hear about and understand the Period of PURPLE Crying and are more able to support carers of young babies.

A purple sticker will be placed on the front page of the baby’s ‘Blue Book’ for midwives to sign and date when they have delivered the first “dose” to the mother (partner, family, support people) and for health professionals to sign and date when the second “dose” has been delivered.

Many families in the ACT do not engage with the MACH nurse service, but almost every infant will visit a GP. Hence, general practices, nurses and doctors, will play a key role in reinforcing the PURPLE crying messages to parents. To support GPs and practice nurses to do this there is an online training programme which is available to all health professionals in the ACT. It takes approximately 1 hour to complete. Every GP and practice nurse who sees infants is encouraged to do the training. At the completion of this course, providers should feel confident in delivering the *Period of PURPLE Crying* program to families and answering their questions. The lessons included in this course are:

1. Lines of evidence and rationale for the *Period of PURPLE Crying*;
2. *Period of PURPLE Crying* video
3. *Period of PURPLE Crying* booklet
4. *Crying, Soothing, Coping: Doing What Comes Naturally* video

To access the course go to

<http://training.dontshake.org/register/user/5044>