

Caring for Substance-Exposed Babies

Babies born with substance exposure have a lot to cry about.

Although treatable, Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome leaves an infant feeling miserable for weeks and sometimes months.

As babies of opioid-addicted mothers go through withdrawal, they may shudder, sleep fitfully, suffer bouts of diarrhea, shake their limbs and often cry a high-pitched wail.

The baby's behavior can be overwhelming, especially to a sleep-deprived mother struggling with her own withdrawal symptoms.

If your baby is being weaned from an opioid dependency, or you know a baby who is, there are steps to take to soothe the infant.

Here are six ways to CALM a substance-exposed baby:

- Rock the baby gently.
- Reduce noise and lights.
- Use a soft voice and calm movements.
- Swaddle the baby in a blanket.
- Give the baby a warm, soapy bath when he or she is agitated or upset.
- Expose the baby to lavender, peppermint, lemon or ginger scents.

Being born with substance exposure is a challenge for any baby.

Make a difference by being a loving, calm and nurturing caregiver.

