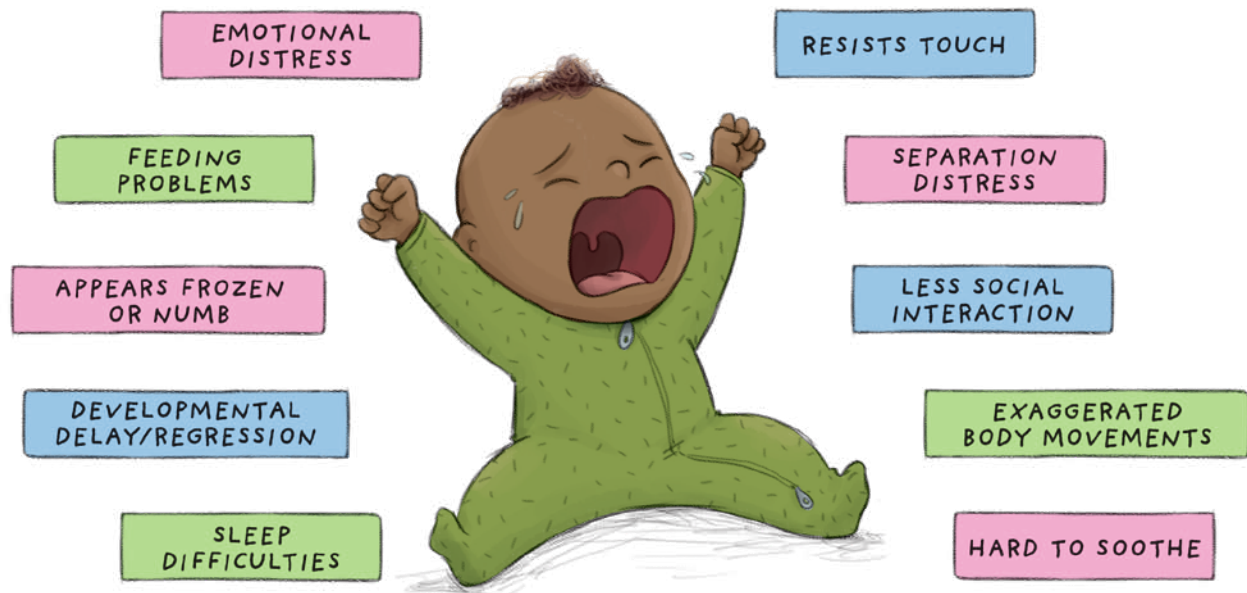




Helping your baby (0-12 months) Medical traumatic stress

A common misconception is that babies are too young to remember or be affected by injury/illness, hospitalisation or painful procedures. However, we know that babies can and do experience medical traumatic stress. Babies can't verbally tell us how they feel but they can communicate pain and distress through their behaviour and physical responses.

Developmental considerations: Babies are just starting to learn to communicate, think, move, express emotions and more. The most important thing in a baby's world is a strong bond and connection with their caregivers. They need their caregivers to keep them safe, provide food, sleep and stimulation, notice signs of pain and distress, and provide comfort. Babies are sensitive to their caregiver's distress, separation from caregivers and changes to routine. Key signs of distress for babies are changes in their connection with caregiver/s and changes in their usual rhythms of sleeping, playing and feeding.



Six ways you can support your baby



Connection: Soothe and comfort with warmth, affection, closeness, and playfulness.



Routine: Follow predictable sleep, feeding and play routines.



Identify emotions: Notice signs of distress or pain in your baby and respond calmly with warmth and affection.



Targeted strategies: Use your voice and body to regulate your baby's emotions (sing, cuddle, pat, massage, rock).



Processing the event: Talk, read and play games with your baby to help them understand their experience.



Seek extra help: Seek extra help and support for your baby or yourself when needed.

Scan this QR code for more information and resources. You can also talk to your child's treating team, GP, paediatrician or child health nurse for further advice.



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Disclaimer: This information has been produced by healthcare professionals as a guideline only and is intended to support, not replace, discussion with your child's doctor or healthcare professionals. Information is updated regularly, so please check you are referring to the most recent version. Seek medical advice, as appropriate, for concerns regarding your child's health.



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