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A Parents Guide: Coping With The Challenges Of Colic

By Dr. Rita Louise

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Colic is a common problem in infants and an even more frustrating condition for parents to deal with. Approximately 10 to 30% of all infants born have colic. If an infant is going to experience colic in its life, it will typically appear within the first few weeks of life and will subside by the time the infant is four month old. Babies with colic grow and develop normally and it is rarely a factor in later physical or behavioral problems.

The term colic refers to a condition in which an infant will cry inconsolably from one to four hours at a time. A typical spell is typified by a high pitched loud cry that is continuous. The child may pull its legs up toward their stomachs as if in abdominal pain or their legs may be extended straight out. Often the infant's hands are clenched. They may hold their breath or grimace. Frequently their faces become flush, while their feet remain cold. These episodes can occur at any time, but often begin in the late afternoon or early evening.

Currently, there is no identifiable cause for colic, but doctors have identified a number of factors that classically make colic symptoms worse. These include rapid eating or overfeeding, swallowing excessive air, intestinal gas, lack of burping or food allergies. Doctors also recognize that an environment filled with anger, frustration or even excitement can play a role in this disorder.

Please note: It is critical that all parents consult their child's pediatrician at the onset of colic like symptoms. It is important to rule out other health complaints such as ear infections, allergies, intestinal blockage, a hernia or even a scratch in the infant's eye.

Recommendations For Wellness

If you are breast feeding:

Watch your intake of caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea and soda.

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Stop eating milk products for one week to see if the infant is reacting to milk protein you have consumed.

Reducing or eliminate gas producing foods such as orange juice, cabbage (and other foods from the cabbage family), beans, broccoli and onions.

Drink soothing herb teas such as chamomile tea to calm yourself as well as the infant.

If your baby is formula fed:

Change the type of formula or type of water being used. You can also try changing to a low-allergy formula or switch to a soy based on.

Make sure your baby is getting enough to eat. Check the hole size of the nipples you purchased. If the holes are too small, enlarge it.

Other recommendations include:

Burp your baby after each ounce of formula or every few minutes.

To reduce the possibility of your child swallowing air, have him or her sit up rather than lie down when eating.

Gently repetitive movements will soothe some babies. Try taking them for a ride in the car or a walk in the park. Rock them in a rocking chair or rocking swing and try leaning their infant seat against a running clothes dryer or dishwasher.

Sounds can also help calm a colicky infant. Many parents have found relief by playing soothing music, running their vacuum cleaner or even their clothes dryer.

Applied heat can also help. Lay your baby over a warm hot water bottle that is covered with a towel or trying giving him or her a hot bath. Add a few drops of chamomile or marjoram essential oil to the water to help them to relax further.

Herbal chamomile has a long history of calming an infant and easing intestinal cramping.

Teas made of licorice root, catnip or fennel have also been found to help.

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Just What Is Colic - And Does My Baby Have It

By Sarah Veda

There are few things more nerve wracking than a crying baby, particularly when nothing you do seems to console him. But, how do you know when your baby's symptoms have are just crying and when he has colic? And, just what is colic, anyway?

No one knows exactly what causes colic, though many old wives tales abound. Lots of older women will tell you that it is caused by parental inexperience, but colic does not occur more often in first children than in subsequent children, so they One thing that seems clear is that most babies who are experiencing colic have a stomach ache. Many are gassy, though a baby won't cry so inconsolably every time he has gas, so it is clearly gas plus something, though just what is not clear.

Though we don't know what colic really is, it is hard to miss when your child is experiencing it. The inconsolable crying usually begins in the late afternoon or early evening and often lasts until the baby finally falls asleep for the night, exhausted. Colic typically begins between two and three weeks of age, and is over its worst by twelve to sixteen weeks, though there are babies who start later and end later. My daughter started at twelve weeks, but thankfully her bout of colic was over in two weeks. A colicky baby will typically draw his knees up to his chest, clench his fists and scream. He may act like he wants the breast or bottle, but reject it as soon as you it's in his mouth. You will get the sense that your child is frantic, and needs something very badly, but doesn't know what.

If you believe your baby has colic, it is still wise to take him to a doctor. There is no cure for colic, but you should rule out other causes, such as an allergy to formula or some other gastric disorder. Once your doctor has proclaimed the baby healthy, you can chalk it up to colic.

Once you know that your baby has colic, though there is no cure, there are some remedies you can try. Simethicone drops, which are available over the counter as a gas medication for babies, helps in some cases. In addition, there are numerous tricks you can try such as taking a drive in the car or running the vacuum cleaner that will work for some babies some of the time. But, overall, colic is just a waiting game. Keep the baby (and yourself) as calm as possible and look forward to the day when it will be over.

Sarah is a 41 year old wife and mother of two boys and one girl. She spent many years as a manager in the corporate world, and gave it up to be a stay at home mom. Go to

now and get her incredible baby minicourse - absolutely free.



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