



Colicky Babies

All babies cry, but some babies cry more often. If your baby cries uncontrollably at about the same time every day, usually in the afternoon, your baby may have colic. Babies who have colic are usually otherwise healthy but cry for more than 3 hours a day at least 3 days a week.

Colic usually shows up a few weeks after birth and may last until your baby is about 3 months old. The crying may last only a few minutes or as long as several hours. Other signs of colic include clenching fists, holding up knees, and tensing abdominal muscles.

Unfortunately doctors are not sure what causes colic, so there is no treatment to make it go away. But there are several things you can do to try to help soothe your baby:

- Hold your baby. Do not be afraid of spoiling him – you are helping build a sense of trust by responding to his needs.
- Keep your baby moving, because motion sometimes helps. Gently rock your baby or put him in an infant swing; dance with your baby; take her for a walk; use a vibrating seat; or, put him in his car seat and go for a ride in the car.
- Lay your baby across your lap and pat or rub her back.
- Burp him more often during feedings.
- Sing to your baby or play soft music. Sometimes steady background noises like a hairdryer, clothes dryer, fan, vacuum cleaner, or radio static help, too.
- Give your baby a bath, gently massaging her belly.
- Offer a pacifier if your baby uses one, because sucking may help him relax.
- Talk with a doctor about changing formulas or moms may need to change their diet if they are breastfeeding.
- Do NOT give your baby any medicines to try to make him feel better unless prescribed by a doctor. Some grandparents recommend these treatments because they were used in the past, but they are no longer considered safe.

Colic not only takes a toll on you, it also takes a toll on your relationships. It is very important for parents to support one another and remember that colic is not your fault or your baby's fault. Talk with one another about your feelings and try to stay positive. If you need a break, be sure to take one! If you are alone with your baby and you feel yourself getting very frustrated about the crying, it is okay to put him in his crib for a few minutes so you have time to relax. Find something that can help you calm down. Call ParentLink's WarmLine at 1-800-552-8522, read a few pages of a book, take a shower, vacuum, or call a friend or family member. If you need more time, find someone who can come take care of your baby so that you can take a longer break.

Sometimes sick babies show signs of colic. If your baby doesn't seem to have a good appetite, has a weak sucking reflex, seems uncomfortable when held, or is vomiting repeatedly, he or she may be sick. If you are concerned it may be something other than colic, call a doctor or health care provider. You should also call your doctor the first time your baby shows symptoms of colic so that you can be sure it is not something serious.

Colic can wear parents down, but take comfort in knowing that it will eventually go away.

Sources:

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