

# **COLIC:** **Learning How to Deal With Your Baby's Crying**

(a pamphlet provided by The College of Family Physicians of Canada)

## **Things to remember about colic:**

- \*Colic almost always goes away by 6 months of age.
- \*You can try many things to soothe your baby.
- \*Giving your baby extra attention won't "spoil" them but some babies with colic do better if they are not handled too much.
- \*Just because your baby has colic doesn't mean they are unhealthy.

## **How does a baby with colic act?**

They cry more than most babies – a lot more. When they cry, they may draw their arms and legs towards their bodies and may seem like they're in pain. Sometimes they stretch out their arms and legs and stiffen, then draw up again. They may even turn bright red from crying. A baby with colic may cry in bouts or may cry almost all of the time. When your baby cries, he or she may swallow air. This may give your baby gas and make your baby's tummy look swollen and feel tight.

## **What causes colic?**

No one is sure what causes colic; but we do know it's not the parents fault. Colic isn't caused by the way the baby is handled or treated. It has never been shown that infants with colic have anything wrong with their bowels. Babies with colic seem to need more attention and react to the things around them more than other babies. This may just be a normal form of expression for some babies.

## **How long with the colic last?**

Colic usually starts between the second and sixth week after birth. Many will stop crying by 3 months. It almost always goes away by the time the baby is 6 months old.

## **What can I do to help my baby stop crying?**

Babies who have colic may stop crying in response to a number of different things you do. These things include changes in the way you feed your baby and changes in the way you hold your baby. You can also try any of the things listed below to see if they help your baby stop crying. It is important to have a routine for your baby.

*Gently rock your baby in a rocking chair or use a cradle.	*Put your baby in a wind-up swing.
*Give your baby a warm bath.	*Give your baby a pacifier.
*Gently rub your baby's stomach.	*Wrap your baby in a soft blanket.
*Put your baby in a stroller and go for a walk.	*Go for a drive with your baby in the car seat.
*Carry baby in a cloth carrier or a baby sling. (ex: Snuggli)	*Lower the lights and make the baby's room quiet.

## **What changes in feeding may help my baby stop crying?**

Try any one of the things listed below when you feed your baby to see if they help your baby to stop having colic.

*Try feeding your baby if more than 2 hours have passed.	*Try stopping cow's milk in the mother's diet if breastfeeding.
*If you feed your baby a formula, your family Doctor may suggest a different one.	*If bottle feeding, hold your baby in a vertical position while feeding.
*Warming the formula to body temperature prior to feeding may help.	*Try using a nipple with a smaller hole on the bottle if a bottle feeding takes less than 20 minutes and your baby seems to like sucking.
*Try feeding your baby more often, but less at a time.	*Gently burp your baby after feedings.
*Feeding times should be quiet and not rushed.	

**What about how I hold my baby?**

Sometimes babies with colic will respond to different ways of being held or rocked. Babies with colic may react to too much stimulation. Avoid passing the baby from person to person.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Hold your baby across your lap and massage their back.</li> <li>*Place your baby in a car seat on top of a running dishwasher, washing machine, or dryer. (do not leave your baby alone)</li> <li>*Hold your baby upright.</li> <li>*Hold your baby while walking.</li> <li>*NEVER shake your baby.</li> </ul>
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**What can I do when I feel frustrated with my baby?**

Colic can be very hard for parents to handle. Babies who don't stop crying can be frustrating to care for. Any time you feel tired and frustrated, get someone else to watch your baby for a while. If you can't find anyone to help you, try going into another room and watching TV or listening to the radio. Crying will not hurt your baby. BE sure you give yourself time away from the baby so you don't get too frustrated.

<p><b>Call your Doctor if:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Your baby stops gaining weight.</li> <li>*You're afraid you might hurt your baby.</li> <li>*Your baby is vomiting, has a fever, or diarrhea.</li> <li>*There is a large change in the usual pattern of your baby's crying or activity.</li> </ul>
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