

Colic

by Blackpool Teaching Hospitals - Tuesday, January 10, 2012

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What is infant colic?

Infant colic usually occurs in babies during the first 4 months after birth. Babies suffering from infant colic often turn red in the face and cry continually, with their knees drawn up to their chest.

Attempts to soothe your baby by “bringing up wind” are often unsuccessful. However, it is important to realise that infant colic is very common and occurs equally in both breast and bottle-fed babies.

What causes infant colic?

It is not known for certain what causes infant colic, but the build-up of air trapped in your baby's tummy causes the pain. Nobody knows why some babies suffer from colic, but it is nothing you have done or failed to do, and you must not blame yourself.

Soothing tips. Try:

- If breastfeeding it may be worth seeing your Health Visitor or Breastfeeding Supporter about baby's position.
- Anti colic teats and bottles.
- Warm bath.
- Placing a warm face cloth over baby's tummy.
- Taking your baby out in the pram for a walk, or a drive in the car.
- Massaging your baby gently with baby oil. Use downward strokes and gentle pressure across the tummy (ask your Health Visitor for details of Baby Massage groups).
- Rhythmical gentle patting on your baby's back or bottom.
- The noise of a vacuum cleaner or washing machine can sometimes soothe a baby.
- Turning the lights and television down to set a soothing environment.
- Putting the baby safely in a baby swing. Many babies enjoy the swinging motion.
- Laying baby across your knees, tummy down, and gently rub or pat your baby's back while swaying your knees back and forth.
- Rocking baby while humming or singing softly. Try using a low pitch sound, which will cause more vibration against your baby.
- Winding your baby more often. Hold baby high on your shoulder, or sit baby sideways on your lap, using your hand to support baby's chest, lean baby forward and gently rub his/her back.

- The 'colic hold'. Hold your baby along your forearm, tummy down, and support your baby's turned head in the palm of your hand.
- Laying your baby on his/her back and gently 'pedal push' baby's legs, making sure you push baby's knees up close to the tummy.
- Carrying baby in a front carrier sling – it can give comfort.
- Using some colic drops. Check product information with the Pharmacist, your Health Visitor, or Family Doctor.

Points to Remember:

- Always consult your Family Doctor or Health Visitor to eliminate any possible medical problems.
- Use the 'Cry-sis' helpline (open 7 days a week, 08.00 to 23.00) Telephone: 020 7404 5011.
- Be aware of your own feelings, as a colicky baby can be very stressful. Do not be afraid to ask for support from your family, friends or Health Visitor.

Useful Contacts:

- Family Health Visitor
- Family Doctor
- www.cry-sis.com