

## INFANT COLIC

Colic can be defined as long periods of crying and the inability to console a child despite all best efforts. Colic is common in newborns during the first 3-4 months of life and can occur for many reasons. During the first few months of life children grow at a very fast rate. They need to consume an increased amount of food in order to sustain their growth and development. Increased food intake can often lead to an increased production of gas and indigestion as their bodies learn to adapt to this new phase of life and exposure to new environmental elements.

Symptoms of colic:

- Vigorous crying
- Inability to console
- Distended abdomen
- Child is struggling when held
- Crying comes on suddenly and stops suddenly

It is assumed that colic is a sign of digestive pain or distress. However it is important to consider the source of the pain. Potential sources of pain include gas and pressure, acid reflux, emotional distress, and abdominal cramping.

Since babies cannot report on their symptoms the source of the colic can be difficult to determine. However a watchful eye and careful report on your babies habits and behaviors can lead to a much better understanding of what the cause may be.

Here are some helpful suggestions to help you treat and prevent colic:

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## Diet

If breastfeeding, remove all possible offending and gas producing foods from the mother's diet. This includes all sulfur containing foods like onions, garlic, and eggs, broccoli, and brussel sprouts, as well as peppers, melons, spicy foods, all dairy products, chocolate, and caffeine.

If you are formula feeding, avoid cows milk and try rice or almond milk. A predigested hypoallergenic formula such as Nutramigen can be tried.

## Food Sensitivities

If you are breast-feeding and you suspect you have food sensitivities then the baby may be reacting to something you are eating. Performing an IgG food sensitivity test can identify food sensitivities or a hypoallergenic rotation diet can be used (the hypoallergenic diet is challenging and you must be very diligent to maintain optimal nutrition).

## Probiotics

Your naturopathic doctor can recommend a probiotic supplement for you and your baby. This provides the bowel with friendly bacteria that will ease digestion and help resolve colic. This is particularly important if you or your infant received antibiotics in the pre or postnatal period.

## Botanical Medicine

Botanicals can be used to calm the nervous system, aid in digestion, and facilitate the passing of gas.

*Chamomile tea:* This is a soother and a relaxant. A breastfeeding mother should drink 1 cup twice a day and a bottle fed baby can receive 1 tsp of tea 3 times a day in formula or water.

*Ginger tea:* A nursing mother can drink 1 cup of ginger tea 3 times a day to relieve colic.

*Fennel tea:* A nursing mother can drink 1 cup of fennel tea 3 times a day to relieve colic. A baby can be given 1 tsp of diluted fennel tea 4 times a day (dilute 1 cup of fennel tea in 2 cups of water).

## Homeopathy

Homeopathy is a gentle way to support your baby's digestion. Remedies are selected based on the child's presenting picture. Select the remedy that best matches your child's symptoms.

*Colocynthis 12x or 6C* and *Magnesia phosphorica 12x or 6C:* used as abdominal relaxants and are the most commonly prescribed remedies for colic. They are especially effective when used together.

*Carbo vegetabilis 12x, 9C, or 30C:* used for babies with a pale face and distended upper abdomen. Legs may be cold from foot to knee. This baby is restless and cries during nursing or being fed and burps for a long time after feeding. Feels better when held and worse when put down.

*Chamomilla 12x, 30x, 9c, or 15c:* can be used when your baby has a flushed red face, feels hot, has a loud and demanding cry, but stops crying for a short time while carried.

To administer remedies dilute 1-2 pellets in water and use a dropper to administer 3-5 drops in the baby's mouth 3 times a day, as needed.

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## Infant Massage

Infant massage can be a great way to stimulate digestion and absorption to facilitate optimal growth and development for your baby. Talk to a registered massage therapist about infant massage or join a class or workshop.