

What is colic?

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- Colic is not an illness.
- Colic is not painful and doesn't cause any damage to your baby.
- Colic is when a healthy baby cries for no reason.
- Not all babies who cry a lot have colic. There are certain things that must be true in order for it to be colic:
 - The crying lasts more than 3 hours.
 - The crying happens at least 3 days in one week.
 - The child must be under 3 months of age.

What causes colic?

- No one really knows what causes colic.
- It is not caused by bad parenting.
- It is not caused by a milk allergy.
- It is not caused by gas. A colicky baby more likely has gas because of the colic. He probably swallowed too much air while crying.
- Some doctors think that colic is a sign that a baby is taking time to get used to the world. The day to night transition may be hard for him. This is normal. Your baby will adjust and the colic will go away.

Who can get colic?

- 10% of children 1-3 months old get colic.

What are the symptoms of colic?

- If your baby will not stop crying, look for signs of illness, hunger, and wetness.
- A colicky baby is not hungry, is not in pain, does not have a fever, and is not sick.
- A colicky baby is usually fine when held.
- Sick babies usually seem sore. They cry but do not want to be held.
- A colicky baby will have a healthy sucking reflex. He will have a good appetite though he may not eat until after he has calmed down.
- A sick baby will have a poor appetite and will probably drink less milk.
- Colicky babies may spit up just like healthy babies. If your baby vomits, you should call the doctor.
- A baby who vomits is sick and does not have colic.
- Colicky babies may pass gas and pull up their legs as if they are not comfortable.

Is colic contagious?

- No. Colic is not contagious.

How is colic treated?

- If your baby has colic, picking him up to comfort him will not spoil him.
- Cuddle and rock your baby.
- Walk with your baby or take him on a stroller ride. Do not bounce him too much.
- Put him in a front pack or pouch close to your body.
- Lay him across your lap and rub or pat his back.
- If he is still crying after 30 minutes, wrap him up and put him in his crib. Keep the house quiet so he can fall asleep.
- If he is still crying after 15 minutes in his crib, pick him up and try soothing him again (see ideas above).
- Last of all, try putting him in his car seat and take him for a car ride. The movement and vibration will usually calm a baby.

- Sometimes, a pacifier will help. Do not rely only on the pacifier, though. Your baby needs your comfort and personal touch the most.
- When he stops crying and looks tired, put him back in his crib. Do not wait for him to fall asleep as you rock him. Put him down first. He will fall asleep soon.
- Anti-gas drops are not usually helpful. One that is commonly used and can be bought at the store is simethicone (Mylicon). It can be given by mouth every 4 hours, not more than 4 times in 24 hours. Maximum dose is 0.6 cc. Use the dropper that comes with the bottle.

How can I take a break?

- A crying baby can be very frustrating. He needs lots of attention but you need a break, too.
- Ask a family member or friend to help you. You will need help with other children and chores.
- Let someone else comfort the baby while you find a quiet place to rest.
- Put your baby in a wind-up swing or vibrating chair.
- Immediately call someone for help if you start to feel like you might hurt your baby.
- If you need to, put the baby down in a safe place, such as his crib. Step away, even outside for a few minutes. Take deep breaths and relax.

How long does colic last?

- Colic usually stops by 3 months of age.

How can colic be prevented?

- Try burping your baby more often during feedings.
- Changing your baby's formula may help. Talk to your doctor before changing. If this is going to work, you baby's colic should improve in 2-3 days.

When should I call the doctor?

- Call immediately if you feel like you might hurt your baby.
- Call immediately if you have shaken your baby.
- Call immediately if your child seems in pain or sick.
- Call if your child will not settle down.
- Call if your baby is not gaining weight but seems hungry.
- Call the doctor if you have questions or concerns.

Quick Answers

- Colic is when a healthy baby cries for 3 or more hours for no reason.
- No one really knows what causes colic.
- Colic usually starts when a baby is under 2 weeks old.
- Look for signs of illness and hunger. A colicky baby is not hungry, is not in pain, does not have a fever, and is not sick.
- Colic is not contagious.
- If your baby has colic, picking him up will not spoil him. Cuddle and rock him.
- You will need a break from the crying. Ask a family member or friend to help you.
- Colic usually stops by 3 months of age.
- Burping your baby more often during feedings may help prevent colic.
- Call the doctor immediately if you might hurt your baby.

References

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