

Colic

Hilliard Pediatrics, Inc. – Dr. Tim Teller, MD – 7/14

Colic is when infants have **prolonged episodes of fretful crying and difficulty being comforted**. Colic is seen in about 10 to 15% of all infants and is most pronounced between 3 weeks and 3 months of age. These crying episodes often remain a mystery, even after all of the infant's needs seem to be met. The crying episodes are no one's fault although parents often blame themselves and feel helpless. Many of these episodes pass after a few months without any specific cause (reflux, allergy, formula intolerance, etc.) being found. Here are some suggestions to calm irritable or fussy babies:

- Change the baby's position.
- Remember that babies like to be dry, warm, and full.
- Swaddle the baby snugly in a soft blanket.
- Provide a pacifier (or the infant's hand and fingers) for sucking. Infants need to suck frequently even when they are not eating. This is a normal state of development called non-nutritive sucking.
- Decrease the amount of external stimuli (light and noise) by going to a quiet room.
- Rock the baby in a cradle, chair, or using a bouncy seat.
- Walk slowly around the house while holding the baby securely.
- A car ride with the infant in their car seat may be very calming.
- Soft repetitive lullaby at nap time or bed time.
- Talk softly with a "shushing" sound.
- Your infant may need a few minutes to adjust from one situation to another.
- Attempt to remain calm. Use gentle, soft motions. Do not nervously bounce or jiggle your baby. Avoid hard patting. Infants can pick-up on their parent's anxiety and frustrations. **NEVER, EVER SHAKE YOUR BABY.** If you are becoming frustrated with your infant's crying and find yourself getting angry with the baby or yourself, then it is time to take a break! Use your family and friends for support and help. You will find that even a short break can give you a new outlook, allowing you to handle the situation more calmly than before. If there is no help available to you, simply lay the infant in their crib. Allow the baby to cry while you take a break for a few minutes.
- Many times we are asked if infants with colic need to be on a special formula or if a breast feeding mom needs to watch her own diet. There is no perfect answer for this question. Therefore, we always recommend that you call us during regular office hours to discuss this issue if your child is colicky.
- Many infants with colic are happier if there is moderately loud

Sometimes it takes a while to learn what will comfort your baby. Your infant will become more "settled" at around three months of age. Try to remember that the fussiness will end. In the meantime keep looking for ways to comfort your baby and don't be worried that comforting a newborn will spoil the baby.

You may find the following book helpful: Dr. Harvey Karp's 'the Happiest Baby of the Block: the New Way to Calm Crying and Help Your Newborn Baby Sleep Longer' (2003).