

## Colic

Colic is a term used to describe a particular kind of crying and fussiness pattern in young infants. Often the baby with colic will begin to have regular periods of crying that nothing seems to console. These fussy periods typically begin in the first few weeks of life, usually occur in the evening between 6:00 P.M. and midnight and usually lasts between one and three hours. The length of the crying peaks around six weeks of life and usually tapers off by three months of age. Unfortunately there is no one explanation for the cause of colic. Neither does there seem to be one single treatment for babies with this disorder. On the other hand, babies with colic outgrow the problem in a few short months and seem to have no long-term ill effect. The biggest harm seems to come from the torture it causes the parents at a time when they are likely to be the most tired from the duties of rearing their young baby. In the beginning days of colic, before a pattern is established, your doctor can help you distinguish colic from more severe disease. This might include serious disease of the intestinal tract, hernias, a hair in the eye or wrapped around a finger or toe, ear infection, urinary tract disease and other problems.

Once the pattern seems clear, there are some remedies that seem to offer hope for the suffering parent and apparently suffering baby. Some babies seem to obtain relief from burping. The simple use of simethicone drops is safe and helpful to some babies by keeping swallowed air from entering the intestine. In the past certain antispasmodic drugs were prescribed which offered limited relief by presumably decreasing intestinal cramping. However, undesirable and potentially harmful side effects have made their use fall into disfavor ([possible apnea](#), [poisoning](#), [risks too high](#)). In other babies certain foods may be responsible. Nursing moms can try eliminating milk products from their own diets along with caffeine, onions, cabbage, garlic, peppers and other potentially irritating foods. In bottle-fed infants a formula that contains no cow milk protein in its base or a hypoallergenic formula may offer relief. Other babies have colic that seems unrelated to dietary factors. Pacifiers, background noise such as a vacuum cleaner or music, help some of these infants. Motion such a driving in a car, swaddling, or rocking is helpful to others. My own baby had colic to the point of driving his two parents to despair. We lived in an apartment and the neighbors could here him crying through the walls. He was only pacified by driving in our truck, listening to classical music at a high volume. Late evenings were spent after long days of work driving him for hours to keep him quiet and away from impatient neighbors. His colic was so motion sensitive that when I would come to a stop at a stop sign he would break out crying only to stop again after the truck rolled ten feet! I would try to find routes where I

would not have to bring my vehicle to a complete stop. My gasoline bill was very high for about two months! For the motion sensitive colic baby, such as my own, there is a device that attaches to the crib that mimics driving in a car. Unfortunately, it was not available when my son had colic. However, I have recommended it for many parents in my practice and it has been dramatically effective for the babies who have colic with the motion sensitive characteristic. I have no economic interest in promoting this device. But I do have extreme empathy for the parent of a baby of colic. You can jump to the web site of the manufacturer of this device and by following this link, <http://www.colic.com/>.

Links to other sites with information about colic are listed below:

[Dr Green answers questions about breast feeding mothers milk ingestion as it relates to colic](#)

[Dr.Green's Colic Advice](#)