

Tummy Troubles

Colic

Are you worried your baby may have colic?

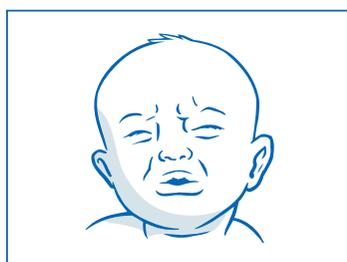
Colic is one of the most common feeding-related problems in young babies. There are a number of reasons why experts believe this occurs. These include immaturity of the digestive system, trapped wind, lactose intolerance and the balance of gut bacteria. Colic tends to occur equally amongst breast and bottle-fed babies. Maternal smoking also appears to play a role.

How do you know if your baby has colic?

Colic is defined as a baby with recurrent and prolonged periods of crying, fussing or irritability, without any obvious cause, when otherwise the baby is well and growing at a healthy rate. The crying often starts at 2 – 3 weeks of age and is worse during late afternoons and evenings. Colic normally goes away by 3 – 6 months of age with no long-term effects on your baby.

Other indications include:

- Screwed up eyes
- A flushed face
- Legs pulled up to the chest
- Lots of crying
- Clenched fists



Do

- ✓ Wind baby frequently whilst feeding, especially if baby tends to feed quickly.
- ✓ Give them lots of cuddles; rock them gently or have them close to you in a sling. Try holding baby in different positions too. Movement can be comforting; try walking or gently swaying with your baby. Going for a drive in the car can also be soothing too.



Do

- ✓ Try some distraction techniques, such as singing, looking in a mirror with them and showing them toys.
- ✓ In some cases babies seem to find household noises such as the vacuum cleaner, washing machine or a hairdryer soothing.



Do

- ✓ There are different types of colic remedies available, so ask your pharmacist for advice.
- ✓ If breastfeeding, it may help to have a look at your diet: caffeine, spicy foods, garlic, dairy and foods that promote wind (e.g. cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, onions) have all been associated with colic.

Don't

- ✗ Don't despair if none of these work. Talk to your health visitor for further advice and speak to other mums with colicky babies to see what works for them. Support groups are available; ask your health visitor for information on the ones that are local to you.
- ✗ Don't let your baby get too hungry between feeds. Feeding them in smaller volumes more regularly may help.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The best way to feed a baby is to breastfeed, as breast milk provides the ideal balanced diet and protection against illness for your baby and also many non-nutritional benefits for both baby and mother. We recommend that you speak to your healthcare professional when deciding on your choice of feeding your baby. Professional guidance should also be sought on the preparation for and maintenance of breastfeeding. If you do choose to breastfeed, it's important to eat a healthy, balanced diet. Infant formula is intended to replace breast milk when mothers choose not to breastfeed or if for some reason they are unable to do so. A decision not to breastfeed, or to introduce partial bottle-feeding, will reduce the supply of breast milk. If for any reason you choose not to breastfeed, do remember that such a decision can be difficult to reverse. Using infant formula also has social and financial implications which must be considered. Infant formula should always be prepared, used and stored as instructed on the label, in order to avoid risks to a baby's health.