



Colic and Your Baby

Colic is the term widely used for what's believed to be troubled stomachs that make babies fuss and cry. There are many theories on why babies develop colic:

- difficulty adjusting to life outside the womb
- food allergies
- immature digestive system
- abdominal gas pain

But the true cause is still unknown.

Colic Symptoms

Most often a colicky baby will begin to cry after her late afternoon or early evening feeding. The crying is spasmodic and frantic and can continue for as long as three hours. It usually occurs every night like clockwork. She may draw her legs toward her stomach and act as if she has a stomachache.

What to Do

Call your doctor if your baby has frequent green, watery stools accompanied by vomiting or if she has signs of dehydration: dry mouth, sunken eyes, lethargy and extreme irritability. If your baby just has colic, there's very little you can do other than wait out the next few weeks and comfort her. Here are some tips:

- Feed your baby in a sitting position to help keep her from swallowing air, which causes gas.
- Burp your baby after every ounce eaten or between breasts if you're breast-feeding.
- If you're bottle-feeding, make sure the nipple is large enough and not clogged. If the hole is too small, babies swallow more air.
- Offer her a pacifier.
- Try the burrito bundle: Wrap your baby snugly in a receiving blanket, keeping her arms and legs close to her body. Walk or gently rock her.
- Vibrations often soothe colic stomachs: Go for a car or stroller ride; place your baby on the running washing machine, dryer or dishwasher. (Never leave a baby unattended.)
- If your nerves are shot, put her into her crib or bassinet, shut the door and take a break. You can check on her as often as every 10 minutes. Avoid letting her cry alone for more than two hours.
- Wrap a warmed blanket around your baby's stomach.

