

## Suggested Remedies For a Fussy Baby

Colic seems to be a catchall term for digestive upsets of undetermined nature. Most alert, active babies suffer some type of "colic" during the early months. Interestingly enough, fussy babies seem to gain weight beautifully. Breast milk is easiest for baby to tolerate at this difficult time and will cause the least amount of discomfort. A great deal of sucking will relieve the tension-pain colic syndrome in the baby. Take each day as you go along---toss the schedule out the window, and in a few weeks, everyone should feel better.

### Possible causes

- peristaltic action working too frequently, creating gas
- overactive milk ejection reflex, creating gas, coupled with: immature nervous system in baby (the analogy is that it's like drinking from a fire hydrant at full force).
- forgetting to burp a very young baby
- too much crying, not enough holding
- occasionally fluoride vitamins may cause problems
- hair spray, perfume, smoking may irritate baby
- too much stimulation, older children, loud t.v., too much handling, visitors
- mother tense or over-tired
- medication, drugs taken by mother (common household drugs included)
- mother's intake of cigarettes, coffee, tea, or carbonated beverages (including "no-calorie" drinks) is too great. Nicotine and caffeine may both be culprits.
- Sometimes over consumption of juices, citrus and other fruits, milk protein and dairy products can cause problems.
- Mother may be menstruating (baby soon adjusts)
- Mother trying to maintain a schedule rather than feeding on demand.
- baby experiencing appetite spurt at 5-6 weeks or around 3 months (5-6 weeks is common, but can occur earlier)
- normal periods of irritability, unrelated to hunger

### Some suggested cures – possible, not guaranteed

- burping: burp before you feed, early in the feeding, and again following feeding
- hold baby in upright position until initial gush of milk slows down, then lower to more normal nursing position.
- eat and drink in moderation, avoid caffeine drinks; if there are known allergies in family, avoid those foods temporarily.
- avoid strong perfumes, hair sprays; don't smoke.
- Wrap snugly, securely, securely and/or use a baby carrier to keep vertical and close to warm body.
- try booties, swaddling, keeping baby warm; use a baby hot water bottle against tummy
- try heating bed while baby is not in it (use a hot water bottle or heating pad), so it won't feel so cold when he/she gets back in it
- let someone else try settling the baby down (someone who doesn't have odor of milk on them)
- if you don't object, try a pacifier
- try singing -- it makes you cheerful and baby can hear your voice; talk to your baby
- hold baby--"Colicky" babies derive much comfort from close contact with mother
- try using a rocking chair and/or walking around with baby

- more frequent, smaller nursings
- offer one breast at a time if the baby is a frequent nurser in order to calm and pacify, without overfilling baby with milk, there- by causing more gas
- some mothers like a glass of beer or wine before or during nursing.
- prevent fatigue in both mother and baby; take phone off of hook, perhaps read while nursing, sleep with baby so both can relax.
- deep breathing to help relax
- try going out for a ride in the car, or walk baby in carriage
- if very severe, get prescription from doctor for medication to break up large gas bubbles so baby can pass them
- a warm accepting attitude from Mom -- stay calm, keep your cool, a remember fussy babies are not at all unusual
- finally, if you have attended to all of baby's needs (fed, changed, burped, held, etc.) you might want to let him cry a little bit. Remember that 30 seconds of crying seems like an eternity. He may just need to fuss himself to sleep. Obviously, you must use your discretion and common sense here-- a baby who is in real and obvious pain should not be left to "cry it out."

It helps to remember that all babies have fussy periods and stages. Babies cry for many reasons, not just because they are hungry or their food "disagrees" with them,, It may be because they need to burp, or they are too hot or cold, or because a bowel movement is imminent, or because they are tired, etc. etc. (Bottle-fed babies cry too). It is hard to stay calm, but that in itself is helpful, as emotions and attitudes are catching. Although it is difficult at times to be a mother, it is a joy and a privilege to be able to fulfill the needs of a wee baby. The La Leche League can help a mother get a little perspective on the situation. Babies do grow up and change. Above All, Relax – This too shall pass!

An idea from Ina May Gaskin, of the Farm, that might help:

"Sometimes I'll see a mother breast-feeding her new baby and the baby is sucking. The mother will be rubbing her fingers back and forth on his leg, feeling how soft he is, or maybe plucking at his toes, marveling how tiny they are. All the time she is fussing with his body she's not realizing that this is the same as tapping on someone's shoulder and trying to get their attention while they're trying to make love. I have cured several babies of colic by pointing out to the mother the way she was handling the baby while he nursed made his stomach and intestines uptight and caused cramps. Once she learned how to get a nice firm grip on his thigh or his butt and let him know she was there without touch-talking irrelevant things to him while they made love, which is what breastfeeding is after all, the baby would get over his belly-ache."

Colic Tea - equal parts catnip, peppermint and fennel seed- use boiling water, steep 5-8 min. and strain. 1 level tsp. per cup of boiling water. Steep 5-8 minutes and strain. If your baby has colic frequently, it helps to make two cups of the tea, double strength, keep the jar in the refrigerator. As you need it, pour an ounce or so into a bottle and add an equal amount of boiling water. Do not sweeten. Some babies will take a lot, some only a little. It can also be given by spoon or cup (make extra, as much will spill.)

Pantothenic acid (vitamin B5) - Many mothers have had success with giving their baby pantothenic acid. The best results have been noticed when it is administered at the same time each day. Crush a 100mg tablet and mix with water. Give this to the baby by spoon or dropper. The baby might only get half of this, due to spillage, but that is ok. There is no need to make up more.