

Colic Awareness

Did you know March is Colic Awareness Month? Colic is a word used to characterize a set of behaviors in infants that involve frequent, prolonged, and intense crying or fussiness with no obvious cause. This means a healthy baby that cries for more than 3 hours a day, at least 3 days a week, for more than 3 weeks. Every year roughly 20% of infants & their families are affected. Colic usually starts in the early weeks of life from two to four weeks and can last through their 5th month. It usually does not exceed 6 months.

There is no certain answer as to why babies develop colic but evidence suggests that it may be caused for a variety of reasons. Digestion problems, sensitivity to formula, something in a nursing mom's diet, over stimulation, developing nervous system, gas, imbalance of healthy bacteria in the digestive tract, or early form of childhood migraines are all theories of what causes colic.

Usually, infants show signs of colic at the same time every day but this is not always the case. It may seem your child cries with no logical reason such as having a dirty diaper or being hungry. Infants also might appear to be in pain. Sometimes they will clench their fists, stiffen their arms, arch their backs, or curl their legs. Babies can also swallow air while crying and this can cause them to have gas and their belly will become tight or swollen.

There are multiple diagnoses that can appear to be like colic but it is recommended your infant sees their pediatrician if you have concerns. Fortunately, colic does not cause short-term or long-term medical issues for children. Research has shown parents also face certain problems when it comes to having an infant with colic. Mothers have increased risk of postpartum depression. Some stop breastfeeding early or have feelings of guilt, exhaustion, helplessness, or anger. If a mom is feeling this way it is important to ask for help. Never shake your baby. Shaking your baby can cause serious brain damage or even death.

Although there is no cure for colic, there are steps you can take that might help soothe your baby. Some things to try are rocking, walking, swaddling them, rubbing, or patting their back, riding in the car, burping them, warm baths, decreased stimulation, white noise, or introducing a pacifier. Researchers have found a few feeding tips that help find some relief as well. These can depend on what your infant is eating like breastmilk or formula.

If a mother is breastfeeding, she can talk with her doctor about her diet and any vitamins or supplements she may be taking. Keeping a log of foods that mom is eating could help find the cause of the infant's discomfort if it is the source of the problem. If the mother is formula feeding, she should talk with the baby's pediatrician to see what formula would be a better alternative. WIC offers a variety of different Enfamil formulas without a prescription. If

your baby requires a special formula WIC also has a list of formulas you can get with a prescription from their doctor.

WIC is a nutrition education program. WIC provides nutritious foods that promote good health for pregnant woman, woman who have just had a baby, breastfeeding moms, infants and children up to age 5. To see if you qualify for WIC give us a call at (740) 992-0392.

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