

Colic Encyclopedia Article

Colic

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Colic

Intense abdominal discomfort typically affecting infants under three months of age and whose cause is unknown.

In the first weeks and months after birth, an estimated 10% of all infants exhibit symptoms of intense abdominal pain, accompanied by the passage of gas. Often signalled by uncontrollable crying, body tension, and drawing up of the legs toward the abdomen, this condition, referred to as colic, typically peaks during the late afternoon and evening hours. The cause of colic is not known. It is slightly more common among first-born children, and more male infants exhibit signs of colic than females.

Some strategies for dealing with colic include wrapping the infant snugly in a light blanket, offering the infant a pacifier, rubbing his back while he lies face down across your lap, or holding the infant over your shoulder and rocking or walking continuously while talking or singing in a soothing voice. If the baby is being fed with formula, switching the formula may help. However, in all likelihood, the colic will continue until the baby's system adjusts and she outgrows it at around three to five months of age. There does not seem to be any connection between colic and any long-range health problems.

For Further Study

Books

Schneider, Phyllis. *Parents Book of Infant Colic*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1990.

Taubman, Bruce. *Curing Infant Colic: The 7-Minute Program for Soothing the Fussy Baby*. New York: Bantam Books, 1990.

Weissbluth, Marc. *Crybabies: Coping with Colic*. New York: Arbor House, 1984.

Young, Carol. *Crying For Help: How to Cure Your Baby of Colic*. New York: Thorsons, 1986.