



Colic in Infants

Colic is a name used by many to describe long frequent episodes of crying in an infant. People used to think colic was caused by problems with the baby's digestion/bowel, but there is no evidence this is true. It is a common problem that affects up to one in five babies.

At 6-8 weeks the average baby cries for 2-3 hours per day, usually more in the afternoon and evening. Every baby is different, but after about 8 weeks, babies start to cry less and less each week. Colic will go away on its own, in most by 6 months old.

Remember colic is crying in an **otherwise well** infant. If your baby has any of the below, please speak to a doctor:

- Fever
- Difficulty breathing
- Not able to feed/gain weight
- Persistent vomiting/change in bowel habit
- Strange sounding cry

Signs and symptoms of colic include:

- Your baby often starts crying suddenly
- The cry is high-pitched and nothing you do seems to help
- The crying begins at the same time each day, often in the afternoon or evening
- Your baby might draw their legs up when they cry
- Your baby might clench their hands
- Babies with colic are often gassy (because they take in air when crying), fussy and don't sleep well

What can you do to help?

Babies can cry if they are hungry, tired, wet/dirty or they are unwell, so first check these basic needs. Try some simple calming techniques:

- Talk calmly or sing to your baby
- Let them hear a repeating sound like a vacuum cleaner/white noise
- Hold them close – skin to skin
- Go for a walk outside with your baby



- Give them a warm bath
- Let your baby lie on his or her belly on your lap, and softly rub your baby's back.

Don't get angry with your baby or yourself. Instead, put your baby in a safe place and walk away so that you can calm yourself down by doing something that takes your mind off the crying.

It's normal for parents to get stressed, especially by their baby crying. Remember **ICON**:

- **I - Infant crying is normal**
- **C - Comforting methods can help**
- **O - It's OK to walk away**
- **N - Never, ever shake a baby**



<http://iconcope.org/parentsadvice>