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## **Colic**

Colic is usually defined as inconsolable crying, often in the evening, for at least 3 hours a day, at least 3 days a week, and at least 3 weeks in a row. During the episode, the baby may scream, turn red in the face, clench his fists, and pull up his legs.

There is much debate about the exact cause of colic. Some believe it is caused by gas, digestion problems, and abdominal pain. Others feel it is more a result of an immaturity of the nervous system and a difficulty regulating sensory information both from the environment and from within the body. Still others wonder if it is a manifestation of individual temperament or personality.

Regardless of the cause, no interventions have been shown to reliably treat colic. Babies suffering from colic can be very difficult to soothe, and will often cry no matter what you do. Thankfully, colic will resolve on its own, usually by 3 to 5 months of age.

### ***HOW TO: Calm Your Colicky Baby***

Colic can be very frustrating for parents. Try soothing your baby with these standard strategies for relief, but know that although some things will work some of the time, you may not find a technique that will work all of the time.

- Swaddle: Wrap your baby snugly in a warm blanket.
- Sway: Use rhythmic motion, such as swaying, swinging, bouncing, and vibration.
- Stroll: Take a walk with your baby in the stroller or drive him around in the car.
- Pacify: Give your baby a pacifier or a clean finger to suckle.
- Calm: Reduce stimulation by turning down the lights, reducing noise, or moving to a room alone with your baby.
- Sing and play: Play calming music, or sing, hum, or dance with your baby.
- Create white noise: Turn on a clothes dryer, vacuum cleaner, fan, faucet, or white noise machine.
- Bathe: Give your baby a warm bath or take a shower with him.
- Go outside: Bring your baby out into the fresh air — it may help him sleep.
- Massage: Slowly and gently rub your little one using baby lotion or oil.

If all these strategies fail, you may need to take a break. Put your baby in a safe place and take a minute for yourself. Call someone you trust for help. Talk about your frustration. Never, ever shake your baby.