

Abdominal Colic

What is colic?

All babies cry, but sometimes a baby will cry for hours at a time, no matter what you do. This extreme type of crying in a baby between 3 weeks and 3 months of age is called colic. Although it is upsetting for parents and caregivers, colic is normal for some babies.

Doctors usually diagnose colic when a healthy baby cries harder than expected in a "3" pattern: more than 3 hours a day more than 3 days a week for at least 3 weeks in a row. **Colic is usually worst when babies are around 6 to 8 weeks of age and goes away on its own between 8 and 14 weeks of age.**

It is common to feel scared, upset, or frustrated when you cannot get your baby to stop crying. But remember that colic is normal—and temporary. Your baby will grow out of it.

What are the symptoms?

Most babies will cry less when they are held, fed, and given attention. These things may not work for babies who have colic. When they are crying, they may clench their fists and stiffen their stomach and legs. Some babies arch their back, while others pull up their legs to their stomach.

Vomiting, diarrhea, fever, or blood or mucus in the stool is **not** a symptom of colic. If your baby has any of these symptoms, he or she needs to be checked by a doctor.

How is colic diagnosed?

If you are worried about your baby's crying, see your doctor or talk about it at your baby's next routine checkup. To make sure that crying is colic, your doctor may do a physical exam and ask you about your baby's past health, what comforting techniques you have tried, and whether you have noticed any other symptoms. You may also be asked about how the crying affects you and to show how you burp your baby. Your doctor may suggest that you keep track of when and how often your baby cries.

If your baby has any symptoms that worry you, such as vomiting or a fever, your doctor may do lab tests or X-rays to find out what is causing them.



What can you do about colic?

It may help to see if there is a pattern to your baby's crying. Many babies cry most in the late afternoon and evening hours. If you notice that your baby cries at certain times of day, you can try holding your baby more before those times. But during expected fussy times, limit visitors, keep noise and lights low, and touch your baby only if needed.

After crying starts, try rocking your baby in a quiet room, or take him or her out for a walk in a front-pack carrier or stroller. Some babies are soothed by riding in a car or listening to a droning sound, like a fan or a clothes dryer. Do what you can to comfort your baby, but accept that sometimes nothing works. If you feel stressed or worn out, ask a friend or family member to give you a break. Take good care of yourself, and remember that colic will go away soon.

