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## SELF-CARE INFORMATION ON INFANTILE COLIC

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You have been given this leaflet because you have asked for infant colic treatment that you can get “over the counter” (OTC) from pharmacies. After a local and national public consultation on OTC medicines, we do not prescribe infant colic treatment anymore. Colic gets better on its own after a few months. These tips might be helpful in the meantime.

### Comforting your Baby

Different babies respond to different methods, so try some of the suggestions below and see what works best for you.

The following suggestions may help:

- *Holding your baby during a crying episode* can help, as can wrapping them snugly in a blanket or baby sling.
- *Hold your baby in different positions* – such as on your shoulder, cradled in your arms, or lying with their tummy faced down along your forearm.
- *Sit or hold your baby upright during feeding* to prevent them swallowing air.
- *Don't drink too much tea, coffee, and other caffeine drinks* if you're breastfeeding – some women also find spicy food and alcohol can aggravate colic.
- *Use a faster-flow teat if you're bottle feeding* – holes in bottle teats that are too small may cause your baby to swallow air as they feed.
- *Burp your baby after feeds* – sit your baby upright or hold them against your shoulder and gently rub their back and tummy until they burp.
- *Avoid over stimulating your baby* by continually picking them up and putting them down – If you're satisfied your baby isn't hungry, tired, too hot, or cold, or in need of a nappy change, it may help to leave them in their cot for a short while.
- *Babies like movement* – pushing them around in their pram or pushchair or going for a drive can be comforting. Rocking them *gently* over your shoulder or carrying them around the house may also be helpful.
- *Some babies find white noise soothing* – this is the background sound of a washing machine, vacuum cleaner, or radio static.
- *Gentle stomach or back rubs or a warm bath* may help.

### Your wellbeing

If your baby has colic, it's important not to forget about your own wellbeing. Looking after a baby with colic can be exhausting and distressing, and it's common for parents to sometimes feel depressed, angry, or helpless.

You may find the following tips useful:

- If you feel you cannot cope with your baby's crying, it's best to put them down somewhere safe and take a few minutes as a time out.
- Ask your friends and family for support – all parents need a break, and even an hour of rest on your own can help you cope better with the situation.
- Try to rest when your baby is asleep.
- Aim to see and talk to other adults every day, rather than spending all your time alone with your baby – you may find it useful to meet other parents with babies of a similar age to yours.



### How do I treat?

As colic eventually improves on its own, medical treatment is not usually recommended. But if you're finding it hard to cope, speak to your health visitor or pharmacist for advice about possible treatments. There isn't much evidence for the effectiveness of these treatments, although some parents find them helpful. It may be worthwhile trying them one at a time for about a week or so each to see if they help.

Treatments include:

- *Simeticone drops* - such as Infacol®, can be used before a feed. The drops are designed to release bubbles of trapped air in your baby's digestive system. If symptoms do not improve within a week, it's usually felt there's little point carrying on with the treatment.
- *Lactase drops* - your baby may have a temporary problem digesting lactose, which could contribute to their colicky symptoms. Lactase drops, such as Colief®, can make digesting the lactose easier. Using lactase drops for more than a week if symptoms don't improve isn't usually recommended. Speak to your pharmacist - for advice if you're not sure what's best for your baby
- *Removing cows' milk* - It's possible your baby may have developed a short-term intolerance to proteins found in cows' milk and other dairy products. Speak to your health visitor or GP for advice.

### Treatments to Avoid

The following treatments could be dangerous for your baby and *shouldn't be tried*:

- *Dicycloverine* (also known as dicyclomine) – a medication used to control stomach cramps that has been used to treat colic in the past, but is now known to cause serious side effects in babies
- *Star anise tea* – a herbal tea that has traditionally been used to treat colic but is no longer recommended because it sometimes contains toxins that could poison your baby.

### **When should I seek advice?**

Speak to your pharmacist - for advice if you're not sure what's best for you and your baby.

If you are concerned about your baby's symptoms or feel unable to cope, please speak with your GP or health visitor. They can advise you about the most suitable hypoallergenic milk formula for your baby. Soya milk formula is not recommended for babies less than six months old, as it contains hormones that may interfere with your baby's physical and sexual development.

If your baby's symptoms don't improve after using hypoallergenic milk formula for a week or two, it's usually felt there's little point carrying on with it.

### ***Useful contacts***

- *Cry-sis* support group can provide help and advice to parents with babies that cry excessively. You can contact the Cry-sis helpline on 0845 122 8669 (9am-10pm, seven days a week).
- Ask your pharmacist
- Patient UK - [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)
- NHS Choices, [www.nhs.uk/conditions/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/)

### ***If you have further questions:***

Call the **practice** on *01285 653184* or *01285 653122*

If you require **urgent** medical advice, call *111 (24 Hrs)*

In an **emergency** call **999**