

Infant's diet is major consideration in colic

Question: My 6-week-old baby has had constant colic. He is fussy during the day but cries inconsolably at nighttime. What can you suggest?

Answer: I find a common cause of colic to be overfeeding. Infants may have sensitive digestive systems and overfeeding, including breast-feeding, can overwhelm an infant. This leads to food stagnation with accumulation of undigested food and mucus. Also feeding infants too much fatty sweet, raw, cold or hard-to-digest food can cause colic. The baby's digestion system is not fully developed until 7 or 8 months and unprepared to break down these type foods. In some cases the baby will spit up immediately. In others, the inability to process food and move it downward causes painful abdominal distention, crying and discomfort. This is the classic cause and effect in colic. For temporary relief, gentle abdominal massage in a clockwise direction followed by gentle downward stroking along the abdomen is helpful.

In China, mothers are encouraged to have fixed feeding times with fixed amounts of food. Babies are separated from the breast when they are three-quarters full and the babies quickly get used to this.

Colic often has a food trigger, particularly dairy. Having the baby or nursing mother stop all dairy should be the first course of action including yogurt, ice cream, cheese, and goat's milk. In severe cases other triggers may include eggs, gluten, grains, nuts, seeds, and beans. Fruits and vegetables and rice are rarely allergenic.

Chiropractic care to balance the nervous system complements a full spectrum approach to removing the potential causes of irritation in cases of colic.

Quote of the week: *"All things are difficult before they are easy."* - John Norley