

Infant Colic

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

There is no "best" way to comfort your baby. Different babies respond to different methods, so you will need to see what works best for you.

The following suggestions may help:

- **Holding your baby during a crying episode** can sometimes 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 fast-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: but never shake your baby.
- **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.

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.

When should I seek advice?

If you are concerned about your baby's symptoms or feel unable to cope, please speak with your GP or health visitor.

For more information

- visit your local pharmacy for advice

Be self-care aware

Find out more about self-care at www.nhs.uk