

Colic

Colic describes repeated episodes of excessive crying that cannot be explained in an otherwise healthy, well-fed baby.

The crying bouts usually occur in the late afternoon or evening. Bouts start around two or four weeks of age and last for three or four months. It is most common in a first child and is uncommon in babies older than six months.

The cause of colic is unknown. Some possible causes are overfeeding, faulty feeding technique where the baby gulps air with the milk, hunger, tiredness or excess wind.

There are no specific preventative measures but the symptoms can sometimes be relieved. Gripe mixtures are thought to settle the stomach by getting rid of wind. Other products used for colic in infants contain dimethicone, which is claimed to disperse the trapped gas causing the pain. Formulas containing anti-spasmodics such as dicyclomine should never be given to infants under six months.

If the crying is accompanied by vomiting, sickness or pallor or a rise in rectal temperature to 38 C or higher, the doctor should be seen.