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Definition

- Colic is generally described as crying uncontrollably for more than 3 hours a day, 3 days a week, for more than one week in a healthy, well fed infant with no medical cause found
- Predictable intense crying at the same time every day, typically in the late afternoon or evening
- This typically starts in the first few weeks of life and starts to improve at 3 months
- It is very common (up to ¼ babies) and occurs equally in boys and girls

Causes and Risk Factors

- The exact cause of colic is unknown
- One proven risk factor for colic is exposure to second hand smoke
- Factors that may play a role (and your pediatrician will explore):
 - GERD (reflux)
 - Cow's milk protein allergy
 - Parental stress/mental health

Managing Colic

- Employ the 5 S's:
 - Swaddling: tightly swaddle with a light blanket
 - Side/stomach: laying the baby on the side or stomach
 - Shushing: make shushing sounds or employ white noise
 - Swinging: rock your baby, take him/her for a car ride
 - Sucking: use a finger or pacifier
- Over the counter gas relief medications are generally not thought to be helpful, but are considered safe for most babies.
- Probiotics have been found to reduce crying times in a couple studies but there is not yet enough information to recommend them - if you want to try a product (eg. Bio Gaia), they can be purchased over the counter.
- Your pediatrician may recommend a two week trial of a diet that does not contain cow's milk protein- either removing it from your diet if you are breastfeeding or giving your baby extensively hydrolyzed formula (Alimentum, Nutramigen) to see if cow's milk protein allergy may be playing a role.
- Most importantly, *seek support!* A baby with colic can be very exhausting for parents. Take a break, ask for help from your partner, friends, or family. Stay positive, this will resolve with time.
- NEVER shake a baby- if your baby has been fed and has a dry diaper, it is okay to put them in their crib and walk away for a short break.
- Talk to your pediatrician if your family isn't coping well.

For More Information

A great book: "The Happiest Baby on the Block" by Harvey Karp