

HOMEOPATHY AND COLIC

Potency and Repetition

Some quick tips on potency (that's the number beside the remedy name...e.g. 6CH or 6X, 12CH, 30CH, etc.) and dosage (how much and how often):

In general, the more intense the acute sickness, the more you will need to repeat the dose. For example, in a high fever, you may need to give a dose (one to three granules) every half-hour to one and one half-hours for up to three doses. In most cases, however, one dose every two to five hours will be sufficient.

If you have a well-chosen remedy (according to the symptom picture), you will begin to see results within twelve to twenty four hours. If the symptom picture changes, a second remedy may need to be given but do not rush giving a different one. If there is improvement, even if it is slow and there are no changes in the symptoms, stick with it. A potency of 30CH will be sufficient for any of the above situations. Again, if you are uncertain at any time, please call your homeopath.

In Dana Ullman's book *Everybody's Guide to Homeopathic Medicines*, there is a great list of symptoms to watch for when you will need to get medical care in digestive complaints, including:

- any severe abdominal pain
- if there is incessant vomiting
- if there is evidence of dehydration: lack of tears, truly dry mouth, loss of normal skin texture, sunken eyes, sunken soft spot in baby's head
- if there is a possibility of poisoning or drug use
- if stools or vomited material is bloody, black, red, tar-like, or resembles coffee grounds
- if there is vomiting, diarrhea or pain after an abdominal or head injury
- if a child's vomiting is accompanied by marked irritability, inconsolable screaming or marked lethargy
- if vomiting begins unexpectedly during the course of a viral respiratory illness

Here are some of the best links on the net talking about homeopathy and colic. Remember, adults and older teens and kids can have digestive problems too and these remedies, when the symptoms match, will be very helpful.

1. “Colic in Babies, Every Parents Nightmare”

by Miranda Castro, FSHom

<http://www.thelaboroflove.com/forum/homeo/colic.html>

The constant crying of a colicky baby is heart-rending. It comes at a particularly bad time, when expectations for enjoying a newborn are cruelly dashed. It can make a new parent feel distressed and ineffective if nothing seems to help. It is also exhausting for those parents who find themselves walking the boards day and night in an attempt to soothe their little ones.

What is colic?

Colic is the name given to the sharp, intermittent abdominal pains or cramps that occur in babies whose digestive systems are still growing. All the internal organs as well as the rest of the physical body carry on developing outside the womb. It is also common in bottle-fed babies who are sensitive to cow's milk and can occur in babies who have had a difficult birth.

Colic doesn't always start directly after the birth but comes on after a few days or even a few weeks. Babies pull their legs up or stretch them out and cry a lot, often after a feed. They may become constipated or you may notice a change in the colour of their stools. They can have colicky periods, usually in the early evening or suffer from more serious colic that lasts through the night — and at its very worst, all day too. This is every parent's worst nightmare.

Feeding Your Baby...What You Can Do

If you are breast feeding then fiddle with your diet as many foods are known to affect some babies through your milk, including cow's milk (and dairy products), alcohol, tea, chocolate, coffee, spices (including chillies and pepper), onions, garlic, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, peppers (especially raw green peppers), strawberries, oranges and grapes. Occasionally egg or wheat products are to blame or even fruit with stones (cherries, apricots, etc.). Try eliminating foods that don't agree with you or those you eat an awful lot of, or eliminate suspect foods from the diet of a baby who has just started on solids and give small meals of bland, easily digestible foods.

Some bottle-fed babies are actually sensitive to cow's milk but you will need to ask your health practitioner about changing the formula, especially if you are thinking of changing to a soya based formula. Although these babies will usually do well on soya milk, it is acidic for some and the high levels of sugar in some soya formulas is a cause for concern.

Some babies swallow air with their feeds, which can cause colic if they can't bring it up easily. If you are bottle feeding then experiment with a teat that has a smaller hole (if you have a young baby) and a bigger hole (with an older baby). Don't let your breastfed baby get desperate for a feed as she may gulp and take in air which may cause her

discomfort. If your baby is gulping milk and air then experiment also with different feeding positions. 'Wind' your baby after a feed or carry her around upright (over your shoulder) until she settles down.

Offer a bottle of boiled and cooled water instead of a breast- or a bottle-feed as there are times when babies are thirsty, especially in hot weather or if they are inclined to be sweaty, and need something thirst-quenching. Do this only if she is plainly thriving (gaining weight and producing lots of wet nappies).

Offer your little finger (the pad of your finger to the roof of her mouth) or a dummy to a distressed baby who has just fed. Some babies will feed almost continuously when colicky but the extra milk can overload the stomach and aggravate the colic when all they want is to comfort-suck. Even with demand feeding it is possible sometimes to offer the breast too often.

Relax when breast feeding a colicky baby, get yourself comfy with a good book, a magazine or lie down and rest while your baby feeds. This may be one of the few times when your baby isn't crying — you might as well enjoy it.

Finally... Remind yourself that your baby's colic will not last forever, even though it feels like a lifetime most babies have grown out of it, have developed a strong enough digestive system to cope, by the age of three months.

What to Do

Try placing your baby facedown on your lap over a rolled-up towel, as pressure sometimes eases colic.

Place your baby over your knees so that there is no pressure on the abdomen: pressure sometimes aggravates colic. (You can use these symptoms as a guide to choosing a homeopathic remedy.)

Give your baby some dill- or fennel-seed tea. Simmer a teaspoonful of seeds in a pint (1/2 litre) of water for 10 minutes. Strain and cool and give it to your baby in a bottle or on a spoon. Do not add sugar or honey. Be careful about giving gripe water as it can contain a worrying amount of alcohol.

Help your baby to pass a stool, if the colic precedes the passage of one. Massage the abdomen very gently in gentle clockwise circular movements or hold your baby in a semi-squatting position, their back to your tummy, legs pulled up a little, again very gently.

Take a break from your baby if you are at the end of your tether. Even if your feelings aren't affecting your baby they will affect you and some time out will enable you to survive a very difficult time in your baby's life.

Look after your own needs if you have become exhausted — get someone to look after your baby so that you can sleep. Ditch the housework and simplify any other chores so that you can reduce your stress load. You will find that you can cope better.

Seek Help If:

The colic persists - especially if your baby screams inconsolably.

The colic is accompanied by persistent vomiting, diarrhoea, constipation or absence of urine.

What is Homeopathy?

Homeopathy is an elegant, powerful system of medicine that has been a favourite with the royal family for many years. People often turn to it when their children are poorly in order to find a more natural way to deal with minor complaints, one that doesn't have the side effects associated with many orthodox medicines.

Homeopathy is often confused with medical herbalism, but it is, in reality, very different. A homeopathic medicine acts as a catalyst for healing. It works by stimulating the body to heal itself.

We work with the basic principle or law of similars - of like curing like. Colocynthis is a colic remedy because in ordinary doses it causes colic in healthy people - the sort of colic where you double up with pain, the sort of colic it can then cure - when given in a very small dose. If you give Colocynthis to a colicky baby who is arching its back then Colocynthis won't work.

Homeopathic medicines are diluted by a special method that releases their healing potential. We call this the minimum dose, the one that can alleviate symptoms without causing side effects. It is hard to swallow the idea that a medicine so tiny ... and in so few doses ... can do anything.

At the end of the day, seeing is believing! Try it for yourself, once you have experienced the gentle but effective action of a homeopathic remedy for your baby you will be hooked and may not care about whether it has the blessing of the scientific community! Babies aren't vulnerable to wanting to please the doctor by having faith in their medicines, even homeopathic ones!

Homeopathic Remedies for Colic in Babies

Chamomilla

Abdomen and stomach are bloated. Pains are unbearable and severe. With diarrhoea: stools are green and may smell of rotten eggs.

Babies scream with anger and are restless. They demand to be carried (fast rather than slowly) and cannot be comforted. They want things, which are then rejected! They drive their parent crazy.

Colocynthis

Colic with a bloated abdomen and green diarrhoea. The pains are severe and come in waves. They are worse after eating (especially fruit) or drinking, if over heated and before a bowel movement. They are better after passing a stool and for pressure or rubbing. Babies draw their legs up and are better for having their tummies rubbed. They scream with pain and are better if you put them over your knees or shoulder.

Dioscorea

The tummy is rumbling and windy. Pains are worse in the morning and better for bending back and stretching out. Colic in babies who arch back (like little bananas) and scream with the pain. They want to be held upright (they do not want to lie down) and their little bellies rumble a lot.

Magnesium muriatica

Colic with constipation after drinking cow's milk. Stools may be green or more commonly are small and knotty and passed with difficulty, with a lot of straining.

Magnesium phosphorica

Occasional colic with few other symptoms. Pains are better for warmth and for bending double — babies pull their legs up and are better for heat — a warm hand or lying on a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel.

This article has been reprinted with the permission of Miranda Castro and Betty Idarius. You can find this article and others about homeopathic remedies on their website, Homeopathy for Women's and Children's Health. You can also find several books about homeopathic medicine in their bookstore.

2. “Calming Colic”

by Rhonda Dorren, BSc Pharm

http://www.alive.com/3278a6a2.php?subject_bread_cramb=152

A colicky baby who cries for hours on end can drive a parent crazy. New parents, especially, find colic stressful. So, if you're pregnant or the proud parent of a newborn, prepare for bouts of colic by studying up on homeopathy and stocking up on a few proven homeopathic remedies.

Homeopathic remedies can be quite helpful. Commercially prepared homeopathic remedies for colic are available and generally include three remedies:

Carbo vegetabilis, which reduces the formation of intestinal gases that often provoke spasms and associated tensions. It eases burning in the stomach.

Colocynthis, which soothes the nerves of the lower part of the abdomen. It is helpful in cases in which infants draw up their knees. It also helps with stabbing pain.

Cuprum metallicum, which acts on the smooth muscle of the intestine, helping to decrease spasms.

Homeopathic remedies are administered when the infant begins a colicky episode. Place them just inside your baby's mouth, to be absorbed by the mucous membranes. Usually the infant will respond in about 15 minutes, sometimes very subtly. If your baby doesn't respond in 15 minutes, re-administer the remedy and wait another 15 minutes. Give a third dose if needed.

Regulated by Health Canada, homeopathic remedies are safe to use, they have no risk of toxicity or overdose, and they are regulated with DINs (drug identification numbers). Homeopathic remedies apply the principle of "like-treats-like" wherein the remedy, given in a micro dose form, would produce the same symptoms being treated if given in a toxic dose.

Homeopathic remedies are a safe solution that may be helpful in managing the challenging symptoms of colic in infants.

Coping Strategies

Colic is not a disease but a pattern of excessive crying with no apparent cause. It affects one in 10 babies, usually beginning at about three weeks of age. After the baby reaches six weeks of age, colic typically begins to improve and is generally gone by 12 weeks of age.

If your baby is colicky follow these strategies:

- arrange for backup care periodically so you can have a break
- try to stay positive knowing it will end
- once the diagnosis of colic is made, trust that your baby is okay

Rhonda Dorren, BSc Pharm, is a licensed pharmacist, author, and lecturer on the topics of complementary and alternative therapies.

3. "Natural Remedies for Colic"

by Amy Rothenberg

<http://homeopathycenter.org/homeopathy-today/natural-remedies-colic>

There is nothing more miraculous than bringing a baby into the world. To have the opportunity to raise a child and create a family is one of the greatest blessings there is in life. Children may come to us one after another in rapid succession, or after years of planning, or perhaps as late-life surprises—by giving birth or through adoption. In any event, sometimes things go smoothly those first few months and sometimes things are a little rockier.

Where are the instructions?!

When a colicky baby is uncomfortable or even clearly in pain, the whole experience can be overwhelming, especially for first-time parents who may feel powerless, insecure, and frustrated. Parents may wish that their baby came with operating instructions, which unfortunately, he or she does not! Homeopathy can help with colic and in turn can let families get back to the lofty business of loving and caring for their baby, which, even with the most easygoing child, can be exhausting.

Colic is defined in the *Merck Manual* as "a symptom complex of early infancy characterized by paroxysms of crying, apparent abdominal pain, and irritability." I have also seen colic described in medical texts as "paroxysmal fussing of infancy," which perhaps better describes the problem. Colic begins sometime in the first few months and, for most babies, does not last beyond the fourth month or so. Most infants with colic continue to gain weight well and may seem extremely hungry. The constant or intermittent crying can lead the baby to swallow a lot of air, which exacerbates matters with regard to gas and abdominal bloating. By the time a family appears at my office for the treatment of colic, they are generally in a desperate state—worn out, sleep-deprived, overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy, and at their wit's end. I do remind parents that colic will not last; but hopefully we can find a remedy to help bring their baby back in balance quickly, so he or she can focus on the work of eating, sleeping, and growing in a calmer, more peaceful way.

Understanding the colic and the baby: It is important to remember that just about any homeopathic remedy can be prescribed for a baby suffering from colic—as long as the baby's symptoms match the remedy's indications. I always take a complete case no matter what the complaint. I try to understand everything there is to know about the colic—that is, when the pain is worse, what seems to make the baby feel better or worse, and what the baby's bowel habits are. I also like to have general information about the mother's pregnancy, the birth, and delivery. I will ask about the baby's skin, urination, temperature preferences, sleep position, and habits. I then try to see how these physical elements fall into the child's overall temperament and mood; that is, I prescribe for the whole child with a special eye to the digestive discomfort.

Homeopathic remedies for colic

Here are the remedies I prescribe most often for babies with colic:

Chamomilla. This popular remedy has introduced many a parent to homeopathy and its benefits. It is used when the baby cries often and cannot be comforted. They are restless, seem angry, and may arch their back in an effort to find a comfortable position. The stools are often green and offensive, even in the breastfed baby.

Pulsatilla. This baby develops hiccoughs soon after eating and you can hear rumbling from the belly. This is the infant that, although not comfortable, is consolable and feels best when in mother's arms, being held or gently rocked. You will commonly be able to see a fine marbled look to the skin, with visible small veins on the face. *Pulsatilla* little

ones, in general, are thirstless, but do not be misled by the baby who wants to nurse or have the bottle for hours on end: it is the comfort associated with feeding that they crave.

Nux vomica. A baby that needs this remedy will most often be constipated. They will need to push very hard for each bowel movement, even if the stool is soft or mushy. They will want to be kept very warm, and they will be angry with most of what one does in trying to help them. They may also have a stuffy nose.

Lycopodium. These babies have a look of anxiety about them, with a wrinkled brow and a worried expression. They suffer from trapped gas and seem to worsen in the late afternoon or early evening just as everyone in the family seems to be getting irritable. They can be helped with a warm compress or warm hot-water bottle held to the belly and will always feel better if they can pass gas. They may also have cracks behind the ears, and a bit of eczema cropping up.

Colocythis. I will prescribe this remedy when the main modality is that the baby is better with firm pressure to the abdomen—when the parents report that they must hoist the baby up and over their shoulder and give that sort of pressure to relieve the pain and crying.

Magnesium phosphoricum. This baby's colic is helped if they can keep their knees up by the chest, which seems to relieve the bloating and gas; they will also settle down some if they can manage a good burp.

Ignatia. I do think about this remedy for a baby with troubling colic, especially if the mother has experienced a grief, such as a loss of another baby in the past or loss of her own mother or husband during pregnancy. These emotional events in the mother's life may influence the baby at hand.

Dosage. I most often give a remedy in a 30C potency, one time, and ask the parent to report back to me in a week. I will make follow-up prescriptions based on how the baby has responded.

More advice for colic

I also make some of the following naturopathic recommendations when babies are experiencing colic:

I ask the mom to try drinking some nonalcoholic beer a half-hour or so before nursing: it may help her to relax due, perhaps, to the hops in it. This can help to break the cycle of a crying baby which leads to a very nervous mother which in turn leads to a nervous, crying baby.

Sometimes the baby will do better if the nursing mother avoids vegetables in the brassicaceae family (broccoli, cauliflower, etc.), as well as dairy, onions, and garlic. If

the mother comes to me having already tried this to no effect, I tell her to resume her normal diet and I go to work looking for the best homeopathic remedy.

Each child is a gift

Having three teenagers myself now, I remember fondly the years of tending to little ones. Having three kids in four years would not be my recommendation to most sane people, but it did afford me the opportunity of "total surrender"! We had our good days and bad—weeks of cabin fever in the dead of New England winters, whole months it seems given over to chicken pox or runny noses. Lots of time making discoveries in our backyard, figuring out how machines work, learning how to communicate effectively and with kindness, exploring the wonders of reading, doing art projects, baking, cooking, cleaning, and playing with friends. Each child is a gift through which we keep on opening, through love and acceptance, laughter and understanding, and ultimately, letting go.

Homeopathy allows us to address the bumps and bruises that surface along the way in the context of raising a family—from the throes of colic to adolescent PMS. I am ever thankful to have the tool of homeopathic medicine—at the office to help the young families in my practice—and in my home to help my own family as well.

About the author: Amy Rothenberg, ND, DHANP, lives in Amherst, Massachusetts, with her husband, Paul Herscu, ND, DHANP and their children, Sophie, Misha, and Jonah. She practices in Enfield, Connecticut, and teaches for the NCH Summer School and the New England School of Homeopathy. Information on the upcoming NESH Two-Year Course can be found at www.nesh.com.

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ADDITIONAL LINKS

<http://hpathy.com/homeopathy-papers/homeopathic-treatment-of-infant-colic/>

[Helpful remedies for the whole family, this is a link to a website journal with a free newsletter subscription. This article gives extensive example or symptoms, written in repertory language, for those who want to add to their homeopathic learning!]

https://www.homeopathic.com/Articles/Using_homeopathy_for_ailments/Homeopathic_Medicines_for_Indigestion_Gas_an.html

[Dana Ullman is a homeopath, author and regular contributor to the Huffington Post. His is a great website with lots of information on remedies, conditions and a source for homeopathic books, education and supplies]

http://mirandacastro.com/articles/colic_in_babies.html

[Miranda Castro's website with lots of articles; she is an excellent homeopath and has spent a large portion of her practice with women and babies and children. Her list of books is also on the site. Plus she is a great little shop where you can buy creams, kits and educational helps.]

<http://www.holisticvetpetcare.com/horse-colic.htm>

[Colic is for animals too! Homeopathy for everyone including the pets!]