

Section 2:

The Gas Will Pass

Coots, Hiccups, Rumbles & Sneezes: These are all normal and expected! Babies are very gassy, and most of the time it does not bother them. Their little intestines are seeing food for the first time, and they are being actively colonized with the regular bacteria flora that adults have. Try to stretch baby out when burping him. The aim is to elongate his torso. Hold him under his armpits with his bottom resting on a surface and pull up gently, allowing gravity to pull his bottom back down onto the surface. You can also effectively achieve this by draping him over your shoulder with his armpits on the top of your shoulder and head hanging over to the top of your back. Simethicone drops (AKA “gas drops”) help some. You can use these right in the bottles or before nursing with every feeding.

DIAGRAM ON BURPING TECHNIQUES HERE

Getting gas out from above may keep it from traveling lower into the gastrointestinal tract. Effective burping may minimize gas. But there will still be some gas that is produced down below. If the gas needs to be relieved from below, try changing the positioning of your baby to work it through. It is ok to lay your infant on his belly while awake to help relieve some gas. Try tucking his knees under his belly and patting or rubbing his back.

Hiccups can be a product of baby’s nervous system growing & maturing, or may be a sign of a nice, full belly (Good work!). Sneezes can also be a normal reflex or her attempt to clear mucous out of her small nasal passages.

Goo-Goo Geyser! Spitting up

All babies spit up some! Some will spit up more than others. Babies have a little muscle between their stomachs and esophagus (tube that

food goes down on way to stomach) that is not as tight as that in adults. This allows milk to slosh up and down easily and even reach up into her nose! Usually this isn't a problem, especially if baby is not routinely bothered by it. If she is irritable during or after feeding, she does not feed well or gain weight, does not make much urine or poop, or she soaks everything & everyone all day long with her stomach contents, then your doctor will want to see her. This may mean that she has heartburn that hurts, a milk protein allergy, or may have another anatomical stomach issue.

Do make sure that you are not overfeeding your baby. A newborn is usually taking anywhere from 1.5-2.5oz per feeding every 2-3hrs. At 1 month they are taking on average 3oz, and at 2 months they can take up to 4oz or more every 3hrs. Some babies may take more than this and not spit up, but if they are, you may be overfeeding. If your baby seems to have a bottomless stomach but spits up frequently, try cutting back on the amount by an ounce and see if this helps.

Colic Frolic: Bringing down the House!

My first son was a “passionate” baby to say the least. His behavior stirred up the entire family. Even grandma packed her bags early after he was born, shouting a quick “Good Luck” as she walked out the door. He cried the majority of the day. If he was not sleeping or eating, he was crying. He barely slept. We were lucky if we could get 20-30 minute naps here and there. All of his needs were being met, but he was not happy, and because he was not resting, he became even unhappier. I used to try to carry him around the house, and that helped a little. I was hesitant to leave the house with him in fear that he would cry in the car or in the store and I would be unable to soothe him.

What I found was that he actually did better in crowds, with the hustle and bustle of people and their buzzing background conversations. One day I just had to take a shower! He was in his usual screaming melody, so I hurried and decided to dry my hair with the hair dryer. At

the push of the “ON” button, he turned off. I thought, curiously, let me turn the air off. He started back up with his crying. As I finished the longest hair drying of my life I contemplated this phenomenon. I took him to his crib, laid him down screaming, tied the hair dryer to his crib, switched it to the cool setting to avoid any obvious hazards, and he slept for 2.5 hours! After that we transitioned him to the soothing sounds of the hair dryer in CD form that we ordered on the internet.

Colic is a word used to describe anything from crying and fussiness to gas pains and reflux. Believe it or not, colic has little to do with stomach or intestinal problems. Maybe babies with colic are gassy because they cry and swallow more air. No one knows exactly what causes it, but it has been hypothesized that certain babies (maybe up to 1 in 4) are sensitive to over-stimulation, and neurologically cannot filter stimuli appropriately. Effectively, they take in everything that goes on around them and cannot calm down or be soothed easily. A colicky baby can cry over 3 hours each day. Colic tends to start suddenly at 2-3wks of age and, like a switch, turns off at around 4 months of age. This seems like an eternity!

Keep in mind that it is normal for all babies to cry some. Adults use words to communicate and relate their feelings. Babies only have the cry at first, and they sometimes need to cry out to release some of their emotional frustration or express their learning for the day. They need to blow off steam, too!

Babies with colic respond well to repetitive, rhythmic sound or motion. The louder and coarser, the better! Many of the usual sound machines do not have a volume setting high enough, and nature & ocean sounds may be too ebb and flow. Your baby may need pure white noise, such as AM radio static, vacuum cleaner, or hair dryer.

Setting a schedule early on is especially important in an infant with colic. They need regular feeds & naps at predictable times. They do much better when they are fully rested.

There is no solid evidence that over-the-counter herbal remedies such as gripe water, colic tablets, antacids help. Be sure to look for additional ingredients/additives in the products you choose and discuss these with your pediatrician. Some parents have chosen to learn infant massage or apply warm heat to their baby's abdomen.

Squirmy Sue & Screechy Sam: The Fussy Baby

We all know that some fussiness is expected from babies, but it doesn't make it any easier to deal with. Is your baby screaming her lungs off and just can't seem to get settled? Here's the checklist.

*Is she hungry?

*Is she over-tired?

*Does she have to burp or pass gas? (This is especially common 30-45 minutes after a meal)

*Is she dirty/wet?

* Is she hot or cold?

*Does she just want to be held/soothed/rocked?

*Is she hurt? (Check her over)-look at her skin, her genital region, her bottom for rash, her toes and fingers for hair wound up around her digits, her band line from her socks, her mouth, her head).

*Is she constipated?

*Has there been an emotional change in her caretaker or change in environment?

*Is she sick (does she have a fever, diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, runny nose)?

If the above checks out okay, and your infant remains fussy and inconsolable, call your doctor. He or she may want to look into the following:

* Could she have scratched her eye? (You might have to see a doctor for this one)

*Does she have reflux? (Irritability when lying flat or surrounding feeds or spit up).

*Could she have a milk protein allergy (marked by irritability with feeds, increase in bowel movements (15-20 per day), blood or mucus in the stool, occasional weight loss)?

*Could she have colic?

Most of the time, the answer is obvious, or she stops crying when you pick her up. If she is inconsolable or sick, your pediatrician will want a call.