

Colic: Why It's No Crying Matter

(NAPSA)—While colic can be unbearable for the entire household, there are ways you can treat your baby's discomfort. Usually presenting itself within the first month of life, colic is characterized by excessive and prolonged bouts of screaming and crying, often lasting until 4 to 6 months of age.



Dr. Sears

The condition affects as many as one in five infants and poses a unique dilemma for parents and doctors. There's no universally recognized cause for the condition, so the challenge in treating colic lies in identifying the source of the problem.

It is widely accepted that colic is a digestive problem in which something is irritating the intestinal system but the exact cause of the intestinal problems can vary.

Two common causes are cow's milk protein intolerance and a recently recognized condition called transient lactase deficiency (TLD), which is an intolerance to milk sugar.

A cow's milk protein allergy can easily be diagnosed by removing all dairy from a baby's diet, or from the mother's diet if she is breast-feeding. If this does not put the colic symptoms at bay, a likely cause is TLD.

Transient lactase deficiency occurs in babies who are born with insufficient levels of the digestive enzyme lactase in their intestines. This enzyme is needed to digest the milk sugar, or lactose, in breast milk or formula. The undigested lactose sugars create gas, bloating and irritation in

the intestines, leading to colicky symptoms.

The symptoms caused by TLD are analogous to those presented in older children and adults with lactose intolerance; their lack of lactase enzyme leads to gas, pain and bloating when they drink milk.

Fortunately, TLD is a temporary condition that resolves itself when the baby starts producing lactase in sufficient amounts.

Before that, TLD can be treated by adding lactase enzyme drops, such as Colief, to breast milk or formula at every feeding. This reduces the lactose load in milk, making it easier for babies to digest.

Lactase enzyme drops are completely natural, and can help facilitate continued breast-feeding or prevent the switch to an expensive, hypoallergenic formula. What's more, with lactase enzymes, babies aren't deprived of the natural and healthy milk sugar that contributes to brain development.

Because colic is such an intricate and mystifying condition, nationally recognized pediatrician Dr. Bob Sears has engaged in an educational campaign aiming to spread awareness of the various causes and available treatments.

Parents can get information and advice through Facebook (www.Facebook.com/ColiefInfantDrops), Twitter (www.Twitter.com/Colief) or by tweeting with the hashtag #TummyTuesday.

Additional information on colic and transient lactase deficiency is at www.RelieveColic.com. Newly available to the U.S., Colief can be found at select drugstores and retailers, including Walmart and Walgreens.

Note to Editors: Colief is proud to partner with Dr. Bob Sears as part of a national effort to educate parents about colic. Dr. Sears is spokesperson for Cross-care Ltd., the manufacturer of Colief. The opinions expressed are his own.