

Homeopathic Healthcare by George Guess, MD

Infant Colic

Infant colic is a distressing and at times perplexing malady. It can drain both child and parents. Fortunately it typically subsides by the third or fourth month of life. Very often food allergies are the causation, milk being the most common culprit. At times some food the mother is ingesting is the cause if the baby is breastfeeding. Emotional tension at home is another common cause. Babies are emotional sponges, absorbing and reacting to parental emotional distress. Then there are the many cases in which no clear causation is apparent. The conventional medical management of this condition is frequently ineffective. Fortunately, homeopathy can provide striking relief to a large majority of these children. The more common colic remedies and their indications are discussed below.

Recommended dosage is one dose of the 30C potency of the indicated remedy every 15 minutes during acute severe colic spells for three or four doses or until relief sets in. For less acute, intractable colic try one dose of the 30C potency twice a day for a few days. If the remedy is correct, evidence of relief should be apparent within about three days. It is important to discontinue the remedy once improvement is apparent, repeating it only if progress stalls or a relapse occurs.

Colocynthis (bitter apple): The abdominal pain is better from firm pressure, such as lying on the abdomen or a parent's hand placed on the abdomen. Warmth also ameliorates. The infant cries angrily and flexes his legs during the colic spell because doubling up relieves pain. The child may scream when the legs are forcibly extended.

Magnesia phosphorica (magnesium phosphate): This remedy has an appearance very similar to that of Colocynthis — pressure and warmth ameliorate the discomfort. Magnesia phosphorica is relieved by gentle pressure while Colocynthis prefers firm pressure. Magnesia phosphorica is in general less angry than is Colocynthis and the relief from heat is greater than for Colocynthis. Since these two remedies are so similar one can follow one remedy with the other should the first not act.

Chamomilla (chamomille): These infants are intensely irritable and scream with pain. They want to be carried constantly, though otherwise they dislike being touched and messed with. They tend to be quite capricious, wailing for one thing and then another, always discontent. Usually the only thing that will quiet them is being carried or being driven about in the car. Often one cheek will be red and warm, the other pale and cold. Be wary of repeating this remedy too often if there is no improvement after the first few doses; the too frequent repetition of Chamomilla may create an even worse situation.

Bryonia (wild hops): These infants will also be irritable. Their discomfort is markedly aggravated by the least movement or jarring; they greatly dislike being moved.

Dioscorea (wild yam): The peculiarity of this remedy in colic is that the infant is made worse by bending forward or flexing the legs, also while lying down. When in the throes of pain, he will throw his head backward and arch his back; such extension relieves his discomfort.

Nux vomica (poison-nut): Constipation is often associated with the colic of this remedy. The infant strains painfully to pass a stool and is immediately relieved after a bowel movement. While most colicky infants display a distended belly, that of Nux may seem hard and drawn in. These babies are irritable and sensitive to various external stimuli, such as light and noise.

Cuprum metallicum (copper): These infants experience violent crampy pain which, like Colocynthis and Magnesia phosphorica, is better from firm pressure; however, the pain is aggravated by heat, unlike those two remedies. The abdomen feels hard and hot to touch. The abdomen can be felt to contract with the spasms.

Belladonna (deadly nightshade): The episodes of colic in this remedy arise suddenly and pass just as quickly. As in *Dioscorea*, during pain the baby will arch his back and scream, but in *Belladonna* lying on the abdomen also brings relief. The child's face may become bright red during the bouts of colic. Jarring aggravates the discomfort.

Pulsatilla (windflower): The *Pulsatilla* infant presents a milder image during colic. Like *Chamomilla*, the baby wants to be held and moved about slowly and is relieved therefrom. The crying is gentler and more likely to elicit sympathy. Loud rumbling and gurgling in the abdomen accompanies the colic. Usually the infant is worse in the evening. There may be an amelioration while outside.

Lycopodium (club moss): There is excessive flatulence with this colic. Often the child is worse from 4 to 8 p.m. Passing gas brings instant relief. The baby may have a worried expression.

Cina (wormseed): This remedy very much resembles *Chamomilla*. The child is very irritable. The abdomen is bloated and hard. Pressure relieves the abdominal pain, as when lying over the shoulder of a parent. Being rocked can also prove a welcome distraction. The face is pale or, like *Chamomilla*, may display one red and one pale cheek. The child may have jerky movements and/or twitching of muscles. Hunger is frequently intense. Also, look for a telltale tendency to frequently rub the nose (due to itching).

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