

How to Tame a Colicky Baby

A daily dose of the probiotic *Lactobacillus reuteri* can improve the symptoms of infantile colic. In a new study, 83 infants were given either the probiotic or the pharmaceutical control simethicone (a commonly used colic medication, also called Mylanta) for a period of one month.



At the study's end, the average crying times of the probiotic group had decreased by about 75 percent, compared to only 26 percent for the control group.

A daily dose of 10^8 colony-forming units (CFU) of *L. reuteri* was given to the infants in the probiotic group 30 minutes after feeding. Mothers were asked to follow a diet free of cow's milk.

The average crying times of the infants in this group decreased by 21 percent, from 197 to 159 minutes per day, after only one week of treatment. The crying time of the control group decreased by only 10 percent, to 177 minutes per day, in the same period.

At the end of the full month, the average crying times of the probiotic group had decreased to 51 minutes per day, while crying times for the control group had only decreased to 145 minutes per day. No adverse effects were reported by the mothers.

Infantile colic is one of the most common problems reported during the first three months of an infant's life; it affects more than a quarter of all newborns. It is characterized by excessive and inconsolable crying, with no identifiable cause.

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Comment:

There are probably few things more worrisome to mothers, both young and old, than a crying, colicky baby. Like most medical problems it is nearly always best to treat the problem at the source. If a baby is crying with colon spasms it is typically related to the foods the child is being fed.

Ideally, the infant should be breast fed. But even breast-fed infants can have colic. In my experience it is typically related to foods the mother is consuming and most of the time it is due to pasteurized milk and/or wheat. So removing those from the breast-feeding mother's diet frequently is enough to do the trick

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Another leading cause of colic is chronic over feeding. When food becomes the primary means of comforting a fussy baby, it provides a temporary solution but often creates more problems. The baby's digestive system is not allowed sufficient time between feedings (about three hours) to digest properly. I have heard tremendous success stories from mothers who go against the typical feed/sleep cycle and instead will feed their baby then allow some time awake – not typically nursing them to sleep. These babies tend to have a very pleasant demeanor and are very skilled at taking long naps and sleeping straight through the night.

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Another approach that can be used is the one reviewed in this study, the same natural treatment that may prevent childhood allergies -- [a high-quality probiotic](#) -- does wonders to lessen colic.

Scientists speculate that the probiotic [Lactobacillus reuteri](#) worked far better than simethicone because it contributed to an overall anti-inflammatory effect in a baby's intestines that modulated immune responses in the gut.

And, with all the bacteria existing in our guts, it's not surprising that balancing a baby's developing gut flora has such a beneficial effect. [Total health](#) begins in the gut, so if your GI tract isn't in optimal health, your overall health will be compromised.

The beneficial bacteria in your gut can help to boost your immune system, [prevent allergic inflammation and food allergy](#), clear up eczema in children and heal the intestines from a variety of ailments. They are also [one of the best ways to naturally combat most causes of infectious diarrhea](#).

I put every new patient in our clinic on probiotics, and it is one of the few "supplements" I personally take. It is [absolutely crucial to be on them if you take any antibiotics](#), as they help your body repair and restore the damage the antibiotics do to your gut flora

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