

For healthcare professionals to use with parents of children diagnosed with colic and constipation



# INFANT COLIC AND CONSTIPATION

A large, decorative blue arc that curves across the bottom half of the page, starting from the left and ending on the right. It has a gradient from light blue to dark blue.

**PRACTICAL  
HINTS AND TIPS**

## WHAT IS COLIC AND CONSTIPATION?

20%

**COLIC is the most common feeding problem experienced by 20% of infants.**

The cause of colic is not fully understood but possible causes may be that infants have trapped wind and/or they may have sensitivities to milk as their digestive system is very small and still developing.

Colic has no long term effect on an infant's health and infants with colic develop normally and just as healthy as other infants.

15%

**It is estimated that CONSTIPATION affects 15% of infants.**

The exact cause of constipation is not always clear. Constipation may be caused by a number of things including a change of diet, dehydration, incorrect feed preparation, allergy, fever and medicines.

### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF COLIC?

Prolonged, intense, unsoothable crying, often accompanied by:

- ✓ Rumbling tummy
- ✓ Flatulence
- ✓ Legs drawn up over the chest (indicating abdominal pain)

### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONSTIPATION?

- ✓ Small pellet-like stools in the nappy
- ✓ The consistency of an infant's stool rather than the frequency of passing a stool, is an important sign in determining constipation in an infant

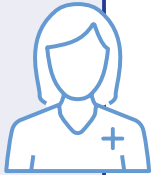


## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR MANAGING COLIC

- Try to calm your infant using white noise (e.g. hairdryer, vacuum)
- Give your infant a warm bath
- If breastfeeding – Talk to your Public Health Nurse, Practice Nurse or GP for advice about your diet. Foods like chocolate, caffeine (tea/coffee) or spicy food can contribute to colic

### POSITIONING For breastfed and bottlefed infants:

- If breastfeeding, get additional support from a trained healthcare professional on alternative feeding positions to position your infant in a more upright position
- While feeding, try to position your infant in an upright position



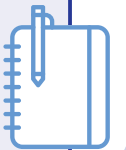
### WINDING For breastfed and bottlefed infants:

- Winding is an important part of feeding your infant, as they need help to bring up trapped wind
- Make sure your infant is winded before, during, and after feeds
- The most common position for winding is to place your infant over your shoulder while supporting their bottom with an arm. Use the other arm to rub or pat their back
- Another position, usually recommended by healthcare professionals, is to sit your infant on your lap in an upright position. Support your infant's chin with one hand and rub or gently pat your infant's back with the other



## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR MANAGING CONSTIPATION

- Keep a stool diary to track patterns and improvements
- Gently move your infant's legs in cycling motion
- Give your infant a warm bath to relax their bowel
- Gently massage your infant's tummy in a clockwise direction between feeds and not directly after a feed
- If bottlefeeding check that you are preparing the feed correctly as per the instructions on the pack.
- If bottlefeeding, offer small amounts of cooled, previously boiled water once or twice everyday.
- Fruit, vegetables and cereals can be offered to older infants (not infants less than 4 months or 17 weeks) who are being weaned to help relieve symptoms.



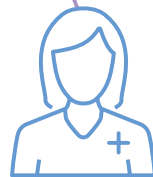
## MANAGEMENT OPTIONS UNDER THE ADVICE OF YOUR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL

### For breastfed infants:

- In relation to colic, speak to your healthcare professional for more information and advice on different breastfeeding positions

### For bottlefed infants:

- Your healthcare professional may advise you to try a specialist formula for colic and constipation
- If so, please note that some formulas recommend using a variable flow teat or a single hole teat with medium or fast flow – all products will give guidance on this or ask your healthcare professional for further information
- Some formulas will cause stools to be softer, looser and greener in colour – this is normal and nothing to worry about
- **If your healthcare professional suggests a change of formula, be patient as it can take up to two weeks to see improvements - this is known as the settling period**
- If you are considering using a specialist milk for the dietary management of colic and constipation, speak to your healthcare professional first for more information



## MONITOR YOUR INFANT

Keep an eye on your infant's symptoms and contact your healthcare professional if symptoms change or any new signs appear. Your healthcare professional will be able to provide you with the best support.



Nutricia Ireland, Deansgrange Business Park, Deansgrange, Co. Dublin

**Important Notice:** Breastfeeding is best. It is important that, in preparation for and during breastfeeding, you eat a healthy, balanced diet. Combined breast and bottle feeding in the first weeks of life may reduce the supply of your own breast milk, and reversing the decision not to breastfeed is difficult. The social and financial implications of using an infant milk should be considered. Improper use of an infant milk or inappropriate foods or feeding methods may present a health hazard. If you use an infant milk, you should follow manufacturer's instructions for use carefully – failure to follow the instructions may make your baby ill. Always consult your doctor, midwife or health visitor for advice about feeding your baby.