

# Well Baby Clinic Frequently Asked Questions

## **Why does my baby get the hiccups?**

Newborn hiccups are caused by a sudden irregular contraction of the diaphragm. Some babies have hiccups in utero before they are born. Hiccups are not bothersome to your baby and require no treatment. If they bother you, offer the baby a feed. Often swallowing liquid will help to dissipate hiccups. The occurrence of hiccups often decreases when babies are five or six weeks of age.

## **Does a newborn need supplemental water?**

Breastfed infants do not require extra water. Breast milk consists of 80 to 90% water. Water supplements can interfere with breastfeeding by reducing your milk supply. In hot weather and dry environments (i.e. airplanes) offer breastfeeds frequently.

However, it sometimes is a good idea to offer formula fed infants extra water between feedings. This can help decrease thirst and constipation that may occur with formula feeding.

## **My baby's breathing sounds very noisy. Is this normal?**

Babies make many sounds when breathing. Most of these sounds don't interfere with their breathing and are usually not a concern. In the first few weeks, babies have periodic or erratic breathing. They also make snuffling noises because they breathe through their noses.

The noisy breathing sounds babies make is often due to air passing through loose mucous in the nose and throat. Often you can feel a rattle in the baby's back or chest with your hand at the same time. This is called a "snurgle" which may develop around 4 to 8 weeks of age. It causes no harm and usually resolves as the baby matures.

Some babies have a "gurgle or stridor" which originates around the larynx or voice box. It can be heard when they breathe in or feed. This is the result of a soft flexible trachea or windpipe, common in many new-borns. These gurgles can last until the baby is two years of age, but require no treatment. The condition resolves, as the trachea becomes less flexible as the baby matures.

If you do notice noisy breathing in your baby, ask your doctor about it. If your baby is well, does not have a fever and is taking feeds normally, there is usually no reason for concern.

## **Why does my baby's chin quiver? Is she cold?**

A baby's nervous system is still immature therefore shaking arms and legs as a baby drifts to sleep and a quivering chin can be normal movements. They will subside by three months of age.

## **I thought breastfed babies were never constipated, but my daughter grunts, groans and strains whenever she has a bowel movement**

Breastfed babies are rarely constipated but they often grunt and strain even when passing soft stool. There is no clear answer to this. Some theorise it is due to a weak

or immature muscle in the rectum or from lack of pressure due to the soft texture of breast milk stool. Babies usually pass stool while lying down, therefore not receiving any help from gravity.

Whatever the reason, **it is not a problem**, so do not use laxatives or diluted juices. The addition of solids at 6 months to your baby's diet should help alleviate the difficulty.

### **Our baby cries every evening at the same time for no known reason. Is this colic?**

Some babies have regular, unexplained bouts of crying lasting 2 to 3 hours or longer. These episodes usually occur late afternoon or evening. The baby may appear to have abdominal discomfort. Symptoms include: frowning, grimacing, and reddening of the face, pulling the legs up and loud tummy rumblings. Often the baby cannot be consoled.

Colic usually appears in the first 2 to 4 weeks of age, peaks at 6 weeks, and resolves by the time the baby is 3 months old. The cause of colic is unknown despite much research. However, the research does support that tobacco smoke in the home definitely increases colicky behaviour.

What is reassuring about colic is it tends to resolve without treatment and the baby continues to thrive and develop normally.

### **Our 7-month-old daughter used to sleep through the night. After our trip to the UK she now wakes 3 to 4 times per night. I think she is used to us attending to her at night. Any suggestions? Please hurry, very tired.**

Babies do waken at night and will probably continue to do so just as we do. They also like habits and tend to cling to them. In young babies night time feedings are nutritionally necessary. However, babies 6 months and older can usually meet most of their caloric requirements during the day and often do not require night time feeds.

If you think hunger may be waking your baby try these suggestions.

- Increase the size of the bedtime feeding
- Wake and feed your baby before you go to bed.
- Make sure your baby is having enough to eat during the day.
- If you are sharing your room with baby consider moving her to her own room. She may be getting used to your attention with every whimper.

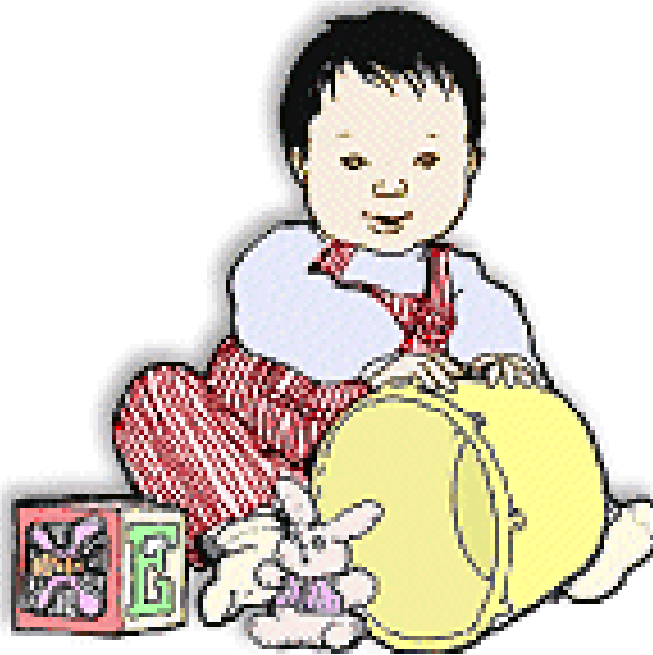
At this age (7months) babies also develop object permanence. They begin to understand that mom exists even though she is not seen. They also begin to recognize cause and effect. Crying will result in mom or dad coming into the room.

The trick is for babies to learn how to fall back asleep on their own without any aid from you. Start by setting a good bedtime routine, bath, comfortable pyjamas, milk feed, story, and cuddles. Make sure the environment encourages sleep. It should be quiet, free of distractions, with dim lights. Put your baby to bed in a relaxed but

awake state. Leave a favourite toy or animal in the cot, say good night and make your departure.

Your baby may protest loudly, but resist the temptation to rush back in. Controlled crying is suggested only for babies over 6 months of age. It consists of allowing your baby to cry for a set period of time. Return to the room to ensure your baby is safe, and then leave again.

If your baby is inconsolable due to possible teething, give Calpol or infant Panadol as ordered by your doctor. Do confirm your child is well prior to giving pain medication and not suffering from an ear infection, which can contribute to night waking.



#### References:

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Canadian Living Magazine. June (2004). Baby 101: Parenthood Primer Learn about a newborn's quirks and why you needn't worry. Family and Parenting. P.193.