

- ✓ Letting the baby cry for a minute or two before responding can sometimes be helpful.
- ✓ Keeping to a regular time each day for feeding, sleeping, outings and playing is helpful in some babies.
- ✓ Make sure you have enough time to relax. Ask a friend or family member to look after the baby for an hour or two from time to time.

## Are there medicines that might help?

No. Nothing has been shown to be safe and effective for infant colic.

## What about herbal remedies?

Again, the answer is no. herbal therapies have no effect on crying and can be harmful.

## Remember...

Infant colic isn't serious and doesn't last long. Your baby will be over it soon.

## Infant colic...

- Is a term for babies who cry a lot.
- Is not serious. (Discuss any concerns you have with your health care practitioner.)
- Only lasts a short time. Babies usually get over it at about three months of age.

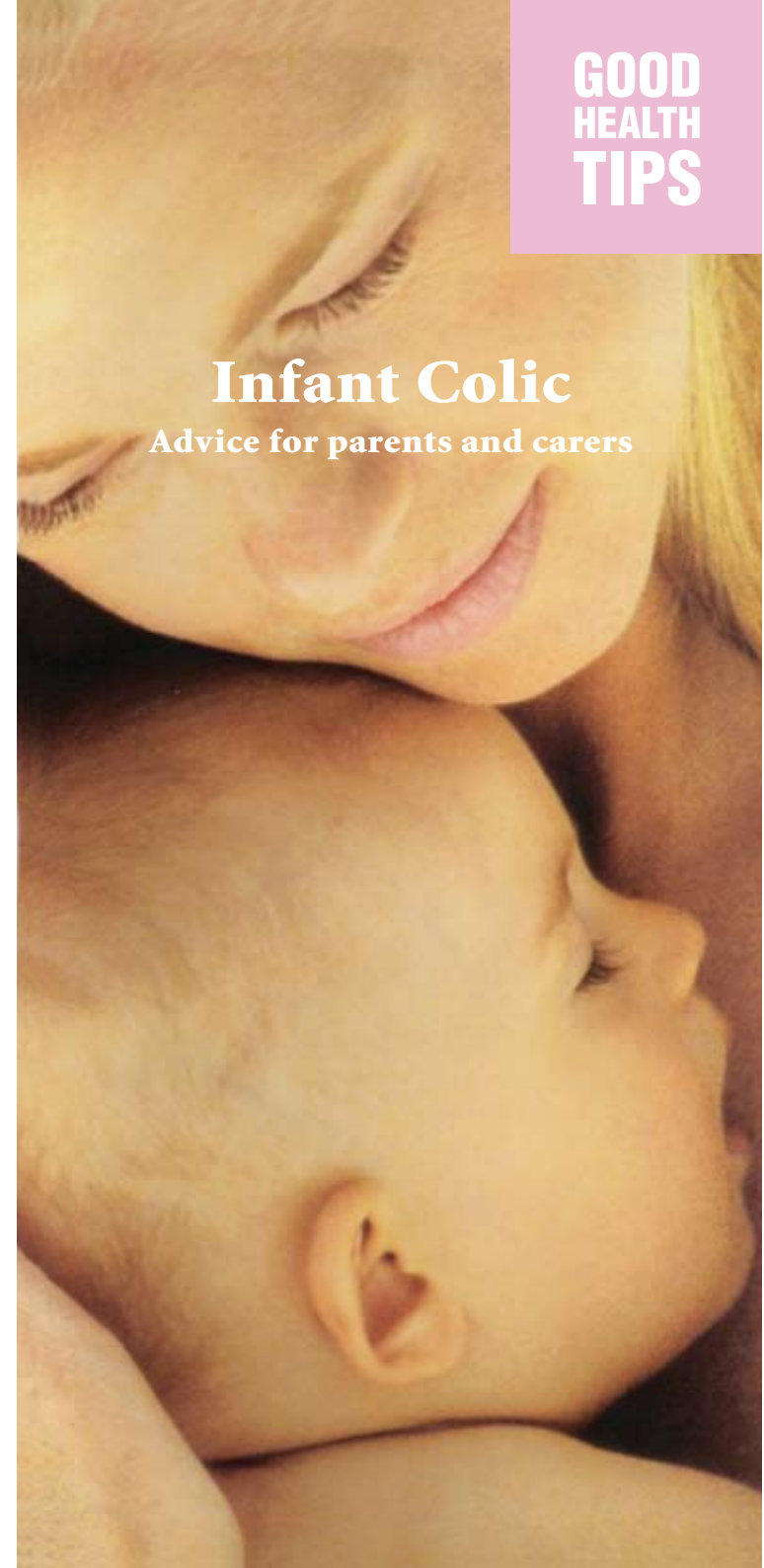
Crying is normal for babies, but some cry more than others. It can make parents feel anxious and guilty, but it is not their fault. Do your best to make your baby comfortable, and talk to your health care practitioner about your questions and concerns.

This document has been prepared by The Gut Foundation and every care has been taken in its compilation. This booklet is intended to be used as a guide only and not as an authoritative statement of every conceivable step or circumstance which may or could relate to the management of infant colic.

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## What is infant colic?

Infant colic is a term used to describe babies who cry a lot and seem irritable or uncomfortable.

## What causes it?

There is no known cause, and colic may result from different things in different babies. Some babies just seem to cry more than others.

## Is infant colic serious?

No. It is a short-term condition that has no serious consequences. It can, however, be trying for concerned parents who want to make sure their baby is happy and healthy. If you are worried that your baby cries more than normal, ask your health care practitioner whether tests should be done to make sure the baby is healthy.

## How long does it last?

Infant colic generally starts at about six weeks of age and lasts about two months. Babies tend to start getting over it when they are about three months old, but some continue to cry a lot until four or five months.

## Is it possible that something a breast-feeding mother eats can cause the baby to have colic?

Too much coffee, tea or chocolate in the mother's diet may make the baby lose sleep and become irritable. Some people believe cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and onion can cause colic, but studies suggest that this is unlikely. Some mothers avoid dairy products because they believe that these foods can upset the baby. Again, this is very unlikely to be true, and it is not a good idea to reduce the dairy in your diet without talking to your health care practitioner. Your need for the calcium in dairy products is particularly great during this time.

## What about allergies?

It is very rare during the first few months of life for a baby to be allergic to milk, however it is possible especially if other people in the family have allergies. If you are giving your baby infant formula, your health care practitioner may suggest that you try one that does not contain cow's milk protein. Lactose intolerance, a condition that makes it difficult to digest milk, is very rare in babies and is not a cause of infant colic. Breast milk is rich in lactose, which is also present in infant formula.

## Would it help to give your baby some solid food?

Solid foods do not relieve colic. Your baby should be at least five or six months old before receiving solid food.

## What can you do?

First of all, accept that all babies cry. It's natural to feel anxious if your baby seems unhappy or uncomfortable, but it is also important to put your mind at ease. If you are worried, ask your health care practitioner to make sure everything is okay. You might be able to reduce the crying by:

- ✓ Looking for a reason. Is your baby hungry, bored, receiving too much attention? Is there a particular time of day when he or she tends to cry most?
- ✓ Making some adjustments based on what you think the reason might be. For example a baby who seems overstimulated may need more rest and less rocking. If boredom might be a problem, try more playing and attention.

