

Infant Cry, Sleep and Behavior Recommendations

Gastroesophageal Reflux:

- . Gastroesophageal reflux (GER) is the movement of food or liquid backwards from the stomach into the esophagus. Sometimes this results in vomiting. Often the stomach contents are acidic and cause “heart burn.” This may lead to feeding difficulty, poor weight gain and/or irritability in infants. GER is quite common in infants in its milder forms. Most infants with reflux outgrow this condition by 6 to 12 months of age.
- . **For 20-30 minutes after each feeding, keep child in a semi-reclined position** by putting him in an infant seat, on your shoulder or in bed with the head elevated.
- . **Continue Zantac twice a day** to decrease stomach acid (7 mg/kg/day). If child does not respond, we may want to change to a hypoallergenic formula or increase the Zantac dose to 10 mg/kg/d.

Bottle Feeding:

- . Do not allow a feeding to continue for more than 30 minutes.
- . Feed in a quiet place (preferably not in front of TV) to avoid distractions.
- . Consider asking Dad to give a bottle at the last feeding of the day – after you have retired for the night. This allows him an important and pleasurable role and you a few more precious moments of sleep.

Colic Symptoms:

- . Colic has been defined as being present when infants cry 3 or more hours/day, 3 or more days/week, for 3 weeks in a row. About 20% of normal children meet this criteria. Colic often peaks by 6 to 8 weeks of age and is said to resolve in most cases by 4 months of age. In our experience, as well as in research studies, infants with colic develop problematic sleep habits and often go on to have sleep problems or to be described by their parents as “poor sleepers.”
- . In a few infants, colic has been shown to be associated with allergy to cow’s milk protein and soy protein. It is reasonable to try a week of a hypoallergenic formula such as Nutramigen or Alimentum to determine if child may respond to this treatment. If symptoms are not appreciably better, return to your formula of choice as hypoallergenic formulas are expensive and smell and taste bad. Infants on these formulas often have looser stools.
- . If child has been crying and you’ve tried feeding, changing the diaper, burping, rocking, etc., it is okay to give both of you a break by putting him down in bed or a seat and allowing him to cry for at least 10 minutes. After this time, check on him and if he is still crying, pick him up and again try your comforting routines. If crying persists, it’s probably a good idea to try another 10-15 minutes of allowing baby to soothe himself.

- For gassiness, try the gas relieving exercises which involve slow movement of baby's bent legs toward his stomach and side to side, while he lies on his back. You may use this a few times per day in order to minimize gas build-up.

Fostering Good Sleep Habits:

- Newborns usually sleep a total of 15 hours a days with a longest sleep period of 3-4 hours. By 4 months of age, the longest episode of sleep should be at least 6-8 hours and the average child sleeps 14 hours/day. At 6 months, infants usually have 2-3 naps a day and by 18 months, they usually take only 1 nap a day.
- **Continue to work towards establishing a regular for child. You may find that he would benefit from an earlier bedtime.** Keep child awake for 1½ - 2 hours before bedtime to encourage drowsiness and better nighttime sleep.
- **Develop a soothing, regular routine at bedtime in his room.** This could include a quiet feeding, a bath, lowering the light in the room, singing a lullaby, listening to a music box or musical mobile, sharing a picture book, rocking and/or giving a special toy or blanket. When he is older and has gotten accustomed to the bedtime routine, have it end by placing child into bed drowsy, but awake.
- **When child wakes at night, keep feedings "business only"** – which means to try not to wake either of you up very much, to feed at the bedside and get child back in bed as quickly as possible. Don't even change his diaper unless you feel it is necessary.
- Choose a regular time for naps, usually to follow a feeding and try to keep to this schedule for at least a few weeks. Young infants are usually ready for a nap if they have been up for 1½ to 2 hours.
- Try to have 3 naps per day but limit daytime naps to a maximum of 2 ½ to 3 hours each by waking child after this time.
- Continue to have baby sleep in his bassinette for naps.

Family Support:

- It is important for you to also remember to take good care of your own needs so that you can continue doing such a wonderful job taking care of your baby. Try to get more optimal amounts of sleep, good nutrition, and exercise.
- Continue to use the family support you have to help with the children.
- Try to nap, meditate, or otherwise relax when your baby does.
- It is important to identify at least 30 minutes a day of "Mom Time" and "Dad Time" when you can read a book, watch TV or go for a walk, as you please.