

HAPPY BABY TUMMIES

Immediate Support for Unhappy Tummies

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Newborns, with their immature digestive systems are easily uncomfortable. Newly postpartum mothers sometimes have not learned the basics. When Baby cries and pulls his legs up to his abdomen, stiffens the legs out, or twisting and arching, means discomfort in the intestines, and usually gas.

- **Burping.** Many babies do not need a hard pounding, sometimes a gentle patting or rubbing offers the best support.
- **Gently bouncing, and nursing at an angle (let baby's feet point downward).** This helps the air bubbles ingested to work themselves out most comfortably.
- **Daily warm oil massage for Baby** helps prevent digestive and emotional problems. It also helps reverse colic and constipation. Sesame or sunflower oil is excellent, but use what you have. Please do avoid nut oils.
- **Constipation.** According to many western experts, constipation is not considered a problem for breastfed babies even after several days. But watch your baby! Babies, like adults, will get uncomfortable both physically and emotionally if more than a day goes by (even less!). Dip your little finger in a little ghee or castor oil and let your baby suck it.

Try the following suggestions for Baby's immediate comfort:

1. **Tummy massage:** About 9 gentle circles right to left (clockwise); cover with warm wash cloth for about 5 minutes or more.
2. **Apply a warm cloth or baby hot water bottle** (warm, not hot water), 10 – 15 minutes. Castor oil is especially effective with warm compresses.
3. **Baby exercises:** Gentle movements will feel good to a gassy tummy and help expel gas. Practice any time of day, but allow ½ hour after nursing and be sure to loosen the diaper.
4. **After two weeks of age, allow about two hours between feedings.** This is important in order to prevent fresh milk from interfering with the digestion of the milk already in the stomach, if this combination happens, gas is easily created.
5. **Fennel seed or Dill seed tea.** This is very helpful for relieving gas and intestinal cramping. The tea can be given directly to Baby (fennel and dill are more soothing than chamomile, catnip or mint. which are often recommended by western herbalists). Make the tea fresh daily: Bring 1 teaspoon to boil in 1 cup water. Steep and strain. Refrigerate extra for later in the day if needed. A few drops may be all that is needed or a small bottle is fine if your baby wants more.

Influences from Mom's side:

1. **Make sure to eat easily digestible foods.** If food is not properly digested, it will decrease the quality of the breast milk.
2. **A newborn's system is immature.** Thus, soothing and appropriate nutrition for mom will help minimize difficulties for baby through the breast milk.
3. **Make sure baby is getting enough hind milk.** Switching breasts too soon will keep Baby from benefitting from the fat rich part of the breast milk.
4. **Make sure meals are fresh, well cooked, delicious, satisfying and taken in a pleasant environment.** These things truly can make a difference.
5. **Avoid dry, astringent and hard to digest foods.** These foods can create dryness and cramping in babies.
6. **Get enough WARM fluids.** Try only warm water/teas for a couple days.
7. **Get proper support and rest.** Ask for help from girlfriends, family, and/or community. Allow others to help and to organize meals, laundry, grocery shopping etc.