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Treatment Options for Babies with Colic

By: Dr. Stephen O'Neil

Dear Dr. Steve: My friend brings her baby to see a chiropractor. She says it has helped her baby sleep and the child no longer suffers from colic. Can chiropractors cure colic? B.P. Belle River

Dr. Steve: Chiropractors do not treat or cure colic. Chiropractors relieve pressure on the spinal column, which relieves pressure on the sensitive spinal nerves exiting the spine. Since these nerves control and direct every other function on the human body, it stands to reason that removing spinal nerve irritation is going to promote better overall function of the body.

Colic is a descriptive term used to describe bouts of crying and irritable behavior by an infant. Colic implies that there is some digestive component to this syndrome. This is often the case, however, not always. Many causes for colic are unknown.

Clinically, infants suffering from colic generally show marked improvement when under chiropractic care. This may be attributed to relief of low back pain secondary to abdominal or gastrointestinal pressure. It may also be attributed to increased motility in the intestines associated with proper spinal function following an alignment. Best results may be achieved when combining chiropractic and abdominal massage, specially designed for the infant. Some other techniques also have some clinical success, including swaddling the child very tightly in a small blanket. This seems to be most beneficial to increasingly active children.

A solid diagnosis should be obtained through history and physical exam prior to any treatment for colic. Some children just tend to cry more than others and this is of no clinical significance except for being parental inconvenience. Other causes of colic may include earache, sinus problem, or gastro-esophageal reflux disorder (GERD), to name a few. If you suspect your child has colic, visit your chiropractor for an exam and some treatment options.

Dear Dr. Steve: What are the advantages of orthotics versus an over the counter shoe insert? B.B. Puce

Dr. Steve: A custom fit orthotic is an insert fitted and designed specifically to fit and support the arches of your feet. They can help make biomechanical changes to the feet, which affect all the joints above the feet. The entire body will be more balanced when you start with a balanced base.

Over the counter inserts are generally to relieve some sort of discomfort and for extra padding. They really have no support or corrective qualities. If worn improperly, either orthotics or inserts can have negative ramifications in one's comfort and balance.