



The Wellness Family

Dr. Brayton Keeps You Informed

Babies Digestion and Elimination

Colic, reflux and constipation are three common difficulties for infants, generally considered to be separate conditions that need to be treated individually. But in reality, the opposite is true. Digestion and elimination are two bodily systems that are directly linked and controlled by the central nervous system.

Your Family Wellness Chiropractor recognizes that when your infant's central nervous system is working properly, and the child is being given the proper nutrition, these three nightmares of motherhood can be controlled if not completely eliminated.

Colic

Colic has been defined as excessive, inconsolable crying of the infant, and research has shown that about 20% of all infants under the age of 4 months suffer from infantile colic. Episodes of colic can total three or more hours a day and happen anytime day or night but will usually begin to follow a pattern.

The general consensus between pediatricians is that colic is caused by excessive gas in the gastrointestinal tract and so their response is, of course, to medicate. The most commonly prescribed medication for the treatment of colic is dimethicone. The side effects of this drug include fatigue, sedation, blurred vision, loss of appetite, constipation, nausea and headache. While this list is certainly reason for pause, the most alarming fact is that the makers of this drug note on their literature that this chemical should not be given to infants under 6 months of age.

There are many holistic options available for colic including gripe water, a liquid solution containing herbs such as dill seed oil. Some brands of gripe water include sugar or alcohol so be sure to check the ingredients prior to use. The only option that is FDA-listed and regulated is Colic Calm, containing nine all-natural, allergen-free homeopathic remedies.

Another option for breastfeeding mothers is to take a probiotic. Dr. Marc Rhoads, M.D., a pediatric gastroenterologist, has looked for signs of inflammation in babies' stool samples and measured a biomarker called calprotectin that typically signals irritable bowel syndrome in adults. His research revealed much higher levels of calprotectin in infants with colic than those without. Additional studies revealed that colicky babies who were breastfed and received a strain of bacterium *Lactobacillus reuteri* cried about 46 less minutes per day than those who received a placebo.

Reflux

While most infants will spit up a little after eating, infant reflux or gastro-esophageal reflux (GER) is a whole different matter entirely. It typically happens due to a relaxation of muscles at the bottom of the esophagus and is considered a result of a lack of coordination between the organs of the upper digestive system.

Sometimes the matter being regurgitated is breastmilk or formula, but a lot of times it will include stomach acids causing the infant to be extremely distressed due to the discomfort caused to the esophagus.



Many parents report an improved quality of life for their children shortly after beginning Chiropractic care.

The highest concern when an infant is suffering from infant reflux is the fear of "failure to thrive". Since sometimes a large amount of the child's nutrition is being regurgitated, many parents worry that they aren't getting enough nutrition. With this concern in mind, many pediatricians will immediately prescribe a drug treatment regimen.

However, there are things that a parent can do to assist their infant that may avoid the need for a chemical response. Many holistic care providers would suggest the following:

- Keep the baby upright as much as possible, especially during and after feedings
- Allow the baby to sleep on an incline, this can be easily done by putting a pillow under the top of the mattress
- Feed the baby smaller and more frequent meals
- Burp the baby thoroughly after each feeding

While these tips may not be helpful with particularly severe reflux, it is definitely worth a try before prescription drugs.

Chemical Treatment of Reflux

The drugs most commonly used to treat infantile reflux are H2 blockers such as ranitidine, famotidine and nizatidine (also known as Tagamet, Zantac and Pepcid). With all of

these chemicals the side effects can include sleepiness, dizziness, rapid or changed heartbeat, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and trouble breathing. It should also be noted that since this is a prescription that has to be given on a regular basis at specified times, missing doses can also cause irritating and uncomfortable side effects.

Eric Hassell, M.D., a pediatric gastroenterologist at Sutter Pacific Medical Foundation in San Francisco noticed that the use of acid-suppressing medications to babies under 1 year old skyrocketed between 1999 and 2004. "There was no good medical reason" for this huge jump in acid-reflux drug use in infants, he says. "There was no sudden epidemic of reflux disease." He suspects that both parents and pediatricians are unaware of the extent to which acid-reducing drugs are being overprescribed or of their potential side effects if used long-term.

The second round of treatment when H2 blockers fail is usually proton pump inhibitors. These include esomeprazole, omeprazole and lansoprazole (also known as Nexium, Prilosec and Prevacid). With these chemicals the side effects can include headache, diarrhea, abnormal heartbeat, rash, dizziness, muscle pain as well as nausea and vomiting. Has it not occurred to them that they're actually causing what they want to stop?

Constipation

Constipation is generally defined as infrequent or hard stools. Our bodies naturally remove water from the stool while the fecal matter is in the colon, if the fecal matter remains in the colon too long and too much water is removed then the stool mass will be dry and hard. It's as simple as that. Generally, a child that has not had a bowel movement in three days or more may be constipated; however, your baby grunting or straining when passing stool isn't a guaranteed diagnosis.

Typically, a pediatrician will recommend either lactulose or a glycerine suppository. The problem with these is that they both have uncomfortable side effects that include diarrhea or cramping.

Current Chiropractic Research

A randomized clinical trial by Wiberg, et. al. studied infants that had been diagnosed with colic and reported that adjustments were proven to be more effective in relieving the infants' symptoms than the drug dimethicone. In fact, the final results showed that Chiropractic care was 200% more effective than the typically recommended drug therapy.

Another case study by the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association followed 132 infants with colic. In this study, 91% of parents reported their infant improved within one week of beginning care with just two to three adjustments.

The Role of the Nervous System

Since your baby's digestive and elimination systems are controlled by their central nervous system, a healthy spine is going to be conducive to a healthier infant. When vertebral subluxation is present in the spine it leads to the interference of nerve impulses, which may affect how your infant's muscles, tissues and organs receive those messages.

Reflux has been attributed to a lack of coordination between the organs of the upper digestive system, and the digestive system is directly controlled by the central nervous system. Many parents report an improved quality of life for their children shortly after beginning Chiropractic care.

In regards to constipation, vertebral subluxation can sometimes be the cause of this discomfort. Parents who have chosen to take their child to a Family Wellness Chiropractor have reported improved bowel function and regular bowel movements with the initiation of a Chiropractic adjustment.

This information is not meant to imply that a Doctor of Chiropractic treats, cures or prevents any disease.



Dear Patient,

Dr. Brayton is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.

This newsletter is provided to you by:

Hoboken Family Chiropractic + Wellness
Laura T. Brayton, D.C.
113 Monroe Street; Suite 2S
Hoboken, NJ 07030
201.792.3544