

Happy Healthy Babies IV: Colic

Colic is a word that puts fear into the heart of every exhausted expectant and new parent. And yet, what is colic really? If it is so common, then why is there not a clear solution? Do babies really outgrow it? I have quite a bit to say about this topic, however, before I share, I'd like to circle back around on the theme of Happy Healthy Babies in general and the symptoms that are typically addressed.

The Truth

The truth is, that the cause of all typical baby symptoms such as infrequent bowel movements, reflux, colic, ear infections, eczema, sinusitis, and croup, is poor elimination. This less-than-optimal elimination is due to poor performance of either the kidneys or the bowel or both. It is exactly these organs that will need support for the symptom to clear. Unfortunately, the natural medicines that best support the healthy development of these organs are not known or practiced by the vast majority of pediatricians. MDs not trained in Homeopathy and/or Gemmotherapy are limited to offering a prescription medication to suppress the symptoms that will only weaken compromised organs and be a catalyst for further chronic conditions. Or, they will suggest that you, "wait the symptoms out," until your baby matures.

These solutions are simply not what parents want to hear, especially when they believe there must be another answer for their child. And there is another answer. As a mother of three I too received this same message over and over again from a variety of pediatricians over the span of twenty years! My son Sebastian probably holds the family record for a host of childhood symptoms that made the early years of parenting him

quite a challenge. Even living in Germany, with the support of a knowledgeable Homeopath MD, the root of his symptoms was not uncovered. It was not until I began the pursuit of my new career in natural medicine and trained with a variety of mentors that the underlying cause became evident. Today, I can see with crystal clarity the start of all of the symptoms that plagued his early years were due to poor elimination. What I would have given at the time for such a simple straightforward solution to his years of sleeplessness, ear infections, and croup.

My firsthand experiences as a mother and the daily work I do with babies in my practice, is what drives me to get this message out far and wide. The answer lies in optimizing elimination. If an infant is solely breastfed then the protocol to address the symptoms will be only a Gemmotherapy extract. If however food or dairy has been introduced into the baby's diet then the protocol will be a Gemmotherapy extract and modifications to the diet. Older babies and children whose elimination organs have been compromised for some time may also need a homeopathic remedy to support their overall constitution in the healing process. However, whether the answer is Gemmotherapy extracts alone or dietary changes or Homeopathy these solutions are simple, affordable and will positively impact the health and wellbeing of a child for a lifetime. We just need this message to reach more parents.

Emma

Let's take a look at baby Emma who was, for the most part, miserable day and night. While her parents would observe brief periods of calm, Emma was pretty much always fretful. She fussed before nursing, directly after nursing, and just simply could not settle into a restful sleep day or night. Emma even fussed through her entire appointment here in my practice, arching her back in the classic pose of a colicky baby. Lucky for Emma her parents had a little experience behind them.

Parents of a two year old as well they noted she never seemed to have these same problems. Due to this fact they sought help early on.

Of course like most parents today, they had performed several internet searches that provided them with a host of suggestions they had tried from infant massage, to movement, to feeding more often and white noise. While some provided momentary relief, none settled Emma for any length of time.

In our session together I performed the intake process I use for all of my clients that covers symptoms of elimination, vitality, and inflammation. It is symptoms of elimination that are the most relevant for young babies like Emma. What I look for in breastfed babies are several bowel movements daily that do not cause any discomfort and that occur across the day. Emma had a very changeable pattern with occasional “blow-outs” and days with no bowel elimination. Additionally, Emma clearly had pains and discomfort with digestion and reflux which are all symptoms that helped guide me to the right protocol.

Like Emma, all babies I have seen with colic seem to have problems with some reflux and always an inconsistency with the bowel movements. While this is traditionally attributed to immature digestive systems, waiting for maturity is not the answer. The problem with that, above and beyond the fact that it leaves Emma and her parents in distress, is that her body begins to compensate. That means other organs begin to work harder, making up for the lack of work by the digestive organs, and in this case it would be the kidneys. Over-worked kidneys lead us down another path with babies and we would begin to see respiratory and/or skin symptoms.

The Solution

The answer for Emma, as in all babies I work with that have symptoms of colic, is a combination of Walnut and Fig Gemmotherapy. I combine equal amounts of these extracts in a

small bottle and suggest parents give 6 drops directly in the mouth before feeding. To begin 4-5 doses are needed daily but as symptoms improve I reduce the dosage. The sooner a baby's colic symptoms are addressed, the quicker the response to the protocol. Colic that has gone on for months may need further support and as a practitioner I will look for what other symptoms have also occurred due to poor elimination.

Since beginning this series I have been hearing from moms across the country and that is so exciting. We can put an end to a host of chronic conditions by directly addressing what is causing this baby's distress today but we need to spread this information. Take some time, if you can, and pass this article along to a new parent or two you know.

While this is already the fourth post in this series, there is still so much more to discuss! Has this has piqued your interest in Gemmotherapy? We'd love to hear from you in the comments! You can also find out more here about Gemmotherapy protocols for yourself or family. If you are a practitioner that works with babies you may be interested in my upcoming training on Gemmotherapy Support for Fertility, Pregnancy & Infants held July 9th in Austin, Tx. Additional trainings are available online.

Happy Healthy Babies Part III: Reflux

There are many wonderful benefits from working with babies but what strikes me the most is their dramatic response to a simple protocol. The root of a baby's symptom is so clear; it is either what they are eating or an elimination organ that needs support.

In most situations, babies are not faced with the same complicated external contributors as adults such as a history of antibiotic treatments, injuries, missing organs, trauma, and stress. That is why the treatment babies receive in these early weeks and months of life are so critical. It is this early period when the immune system and it's response is established for life. Parents, you are presented with a golden opportunity to set your child up with healthy digestion and optimal elimination both which contribute to a stable and strong immune system.

Sadly, this golden opportunity gets passed over time and time again. Well-meaning parents get caught in the loop of treating their child as opposed to healing their child. What is the difference? Well, treatment involves the use of a medication to stop/suppress the symptoms occurring while healing resolves the symptom at the root cause. Not only are the results remarkable in that moment but the cost of treatment to that baby's health is felt over a lifetime.

Healing symptoms that occur due to poor elimination early in life is simple and straightforward when equipped with the right tools. I believe Gemmotherapy is a fabulous tool for every new parent and for practitioners who work with infants and children. Gemmotherapy extracts are unique as they use the meristems of trees and shrubs. This makes Gemmotherapy extracts the only medicine that can clean and restore organs on a cellular level. When it comes to babies and young children that process is short and simple.

It is important to note that it is a serious misconception that a baby's elimination symptoms are actually outgrown. The issues caused by poor elimination only multiply, becoming more serious chronic conditions. Take a look at this article on childhood ailments to see what happens over time when something as simple as poor elimination in an infant is ignored.

In Happy Healthy Babies Part II I shared Ella's story. Ella had difficulty settling into sleep after feeding or waking in distress shortly after she dropped off from exhaustion. As new parents, Ella's were at a loss and wondered if her symptoms were "just normal." We determined that they were not, just as Ella's bowel elimination was not normal either.

Philips Story

This week, let's take a look at Philip who struggled with reflux at 3 months of age. This is a common symptom among young babies as their digestive tracts mature. It can become a problem and worrisome to parents when it occurs after almost every meal and baby may not be gaining weight as expected. Pediatricians will suggest waiting it out or prescribe an acid blocking medication. Neither approach addresses the root of the symptoms.

I see many cases like Philip's in my practice and am grateful to have use of a Gemmotherapy extract that supports the healthy development of an infant's digestive tract. The action of Fig Gemmotherapy works precisely on the mouth to stomach portion of the digestive tract, exactly the root of the reflux symptom. Fig will support the organs themselves to mature and encourage healthy digestion.

As with Ella's case last week, I instructed Philip's mother to give him the drops directly in his mouth prior to nursing beginning with 4x daily until his reflux subsided. Once consistent with the dosage, an improvement was seen within the week. I advised continuing the 4x daily dosage until the reflux was no longer occurring and then continue 2x daily as a maintenance. Because Gemmotherapy extracts support healthy growth and development of organ tissue, instead of suppressing a symptom, the continued use is only helpful. I will check back in 6 weeks to see if the Gemmotherapy is still needed.

Has this sparked your interest in Gemmotherapy? You can

learn more about this topic in my latest book Building Immunity in Babies and Children. Looking for a deeper dive into the uses of Gemmotherapy? You may want to consider joining my upcoming Foundation of Gemmotherapy Series.

A Family Move

Eleven years ago we traveled from Heidelberg, Germany for a summertime visit to Austin. We had been on the lookout for a stateside home and a dear family friend, and long time Austin resident, thought it might just meet our criteria. Within days, our family fell head over heels in love with Austin and in particular the neighborhood of Travis Heights. We were captivated by the massive historic oak trees, Stacy Park, and the historic bungalows that had been so well preserved. Shortly after our visit we put in an offer on 511 East Mary and have never regretted the decision. Since our arrival, Austin has grown by leaps and bounds and we have watched the effects of that growth slowly penetrate our neighborhood in the heart of the city. The quaint and simple cottages that drew us in are now being destroyed or moved out. The very trees we treasured were cleared and mega homes that fill the lots now tower over the remaining craftsman homes.

When these changes came to our East Mary Street early this year we began considering our options. Returning to Europe was certainly on the list but our dream had been to live between the two continents with a home base in each place. Austin has become home to Sebastian, and our two grown daughters and boyfriends have made it their home as well. So what to do?

Sebastian's recent goal of transferring from Austin Community College to Texas State, San Marcos helped us out. Having observed several Austin friends settle into to the thriving

art community of San Marcos certainly added to our interest. Just 40 minutes down the road, it would still be within a commute distance for the few days of week Joachim needed to be at his Clarksville office and certainly close enough to meet up with the girls and boyfriends for family gatherings. What we didn't know at the time but what clinched the deal was the dedication of the San Marcos community to maintaining nature preserves within and around the city.

And so it has been decided. We have located a gorgeous wooded lot in an established neighborhood in the hills just above Texas State University. Plans are being finalized now for a lovely family home. Our current at 511 East Mary Street is now on the market and within the next month or so the three of us along with our beloved pets Ruby and Lucy and the Vital Extract store will transition down the road to San Marcos. Our first stop will be a rental house which will be our respite while our house is constructed.

What does that mean for my practice? For those of you who meet me on Zoom already, my family move won't impact you one bit. However, you loyal Austinites who have helped build my practice will face the greatest change. As of April 12th, due to the unpredictable parade of realtors showing our home I will be transitioning all who are willing to remote appointments. I expect to continue with a remote only practice through my summer months in Europe. By the first of September I will have a better feel for what I can then offer in person. We will continue offering local pick up of Gemmos and remedies, until we physically relocate in San Marcos.

I will certainly be able to provide you with a two week notice. Once we've relocated, we will be happy to ship your order by post with the same care provided to the hundreds of customers who reside outside of Austin.

I am thankful to all of my clients, colleagues, and friends who have made my time in Austin a time of growth, discovery,

and success. Stay tuned as we make this transition and celebrate a new beginning.

Morning Smoothies

~Adapted by Tanya Renner~

Last weekend I was honored to lead a grace filled weekend retreat at Spirit Fire in Leyden, MA. Woven into the magic of the land and the center itself is the heavenly plant based food so lovingly prepared by our hosts. Here are two smoothies that greeted us each morning. Special thanks to Tanya Renner for sorting out the proportions and sharing.

Morning Smoothie 1:

**Pineapple, cucumber, cilantro,
banana, lime, vanilla, coconut
water, coconut milk**

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cucumber

1 cup pineapple,

$\frac{1}{2}$ banana

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup coconut milk

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup coconut water

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of vanilla

1 lime with zest

A hand of cilantro greens

Morning Smoothie 2:

**Watermelon, Black cherries,
Cucumber, Basil, Banana, Coconut
Water, Coconut Milk**

1 cup cubed watermelon

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup frozen black cherries

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cucumber

$\frac{1}{2}$ banana

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup coconut milk

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup coconut water

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup loosely packed basil leaves

Why Retreats?

Just last weekend I was privileged to lead a Gemmotherapy practitioner retreat in Leyden MA. I made a conscious decision to arrive early in order to spend 36 hours in silence. Not only was this a gift to myself but also to those attending as I had, “fully arrived,” before diving in to their schedule. We had a grace filled three days together and as an introvert I certainly give credit to my days of silence for my ability to stay present.

There was certainly a time in my life in which the idea of a

silent retreat would have sent me into panic. Trust me, the last thing I wanted to do was be still and hear my inner dialogue. Today it's a different story. Quite frankly, I can't get enough. While I previously considered retreats to be an, "escape," from life, now I see them as exactly the opposite. A retreat is a time for tuning in, not tuning out. It provides the opportunity to quiet the noise of our busy-ness, and connect to what is really happening and what you really are feeling. Here's some good information on the benefits of silence.

I used the word privileged to begin this post and without a doubt this word is used appropriately. I fully recognize all that is entailed to make a retreat, given family obligations and financial restrictions. I do feel privileged that I am at an age and comfort level in life that I can partake in such a rich experience. The truth however, is that one doesn't have to fly off to a spiritual setting or book into a center to make a retreat. Mini retreats can be created right where you are by carving time out of your ordinary, everyday life. It's all about perspective.

A retreat to a new mother may be 30 minutes of sitting in silence with her cup of tea. To those in the 9-5+ world it may be stepping outside for a 15 minute mindful walk in a nearby park. You can even create your own full day retreat by heading out to state park on your own or unplugging from your phone and laptop for a 24 hour period and reacquaint yourself with the art of "being" rather than "doing". If my ideas are not detailed enough to inspire you, The Chopra Center blog offers this plan for creating your very own DIY retreat. May this serve as a personal invitation to bring some retreat time into your life. Set an appointment with yourself and make it happen. Start small, dream big.

Spring Carrot Salad

Carrot salad has always been a weeknight standard in the Hubele salad rotation. It's a quick prep when time is limited and because it only improves with an overnight in the fridge, it makes for a welcome lunch the following day. This Heidi Swanson version however takes carrot salad to the next level and is well deserving of a place in your next dinner party menu.

Ingredients

2 bunches carrots, preferably local rainbow variety

Extra virgin olive oil

Fine grain sea salt

1 green chile (serrano), deveined and minced

1 lemon, zest and juice

1 cup cilantro, chopped

1 cup green pumpkin seeds (pepitas), toasted

Instructions

Wash carrots and use a vegetable peeler to shave each carrot into wide ribbons.

Heat a bit of of olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat.

Add a big pinch of salt and stir in the carrot ribbons.

Saute for only 20 seconds or so – just enough to take the raw edge and a bit of crunch off the carrots.

Quickly stir in the chiles and lemon zest.

Remove from heat and stir in the cilantro, a tablespoon or two of lemon juice and then most of the pepitas.

Taste adding more salt and/or lemon juice as needed.

Garnish with remaining pepitas.

Serves 3 hungry Hubeles or 4 dinner guests with normal appetites ☐

Adapted from Heidi Swanson, 101 Cookbooks.

Happy Healthy Babies Part II: Infrequent Elimination

I LOVE working with babies! I so appreciate the opportunity to share with parents the benefits of natural remedies for the simple ailments of infancy such as constipation, acid reflux, colic, and croup. Gemmotherapy can provide exactly the support these young developing bodies need for their digestive system because of its unique ability to clean and fortify organ tissue. Unfortunately, when seeking help, most parents are given advice to either wait it out until their baby's discomfort passes or they are handed a prescription to suppress the symptom. I'd like to say neither is acceptable or helpful to baby or parents.

The early development of the digestive system is critical in the building of a healthy immune system. Science is making more gains on this by the day as we learn that the chronic dis-eases of our generation stem from disturbances in this highly sensitive system. So it IS critical we pay attention to these early symptoms and set healthy patterns at the beginning of life. If you'd like to read more about this topic, I

recommend this in-depth article by my colleague Dr. Ron Whitmont, a MD Homeopath, who discusses the body's microbiome and chronic disease.

I introduced this series last week, sharing the impact over time of poor elimination. One version of poor elimination is infrequent stools. Let's take a look at how simply a case of infrequent stools from my practice was solved with Gemmotherapy.

Ella's Story

Ella was a 6 week old, c-section delivered, breastfed infant. I met with Ella and her parents when they came in for help with what they perceived as her inability to settle. They described her pattern of falling asleep (day or night) and waking shortly afterwards in distress and her inability to settle back into sleep after a night feeding, searching for comfort. She could not easily bring up a burp and would wail in discomfort. New at the game of parenting, they weren't sure if this was normal or not.

I questioned Ella's parents about her bowel elimination. Was she passing stools easily after each breastfeeding or at least several each day? I was not surprised to hear that Ella sometimes skipped a day of bowel movements, and mostly had only one. While their pediatrician had shown no concern, I knew from my own clinical experience that when the bowels do not empty completely, sleep is disturbed among a host of other things. So how does a parent know if their baby is eliminating enough? Breastfed babies should have 3-4 bowel eliminations, spread out in the day. These stools should never produce any discomfort in passing or be explosive, blowing out the top of the diaper. Formula fed babies should have 2-3 stools daily that are never pellet like, produce any discomfort in passing or are explosive, blowing out the top of the diaper.

Extracts to Consider

If your baby has any secondary symptoms such as sleep disturbances, acid reflux, colic, skin conditions, or sinus congestion you can be sure the bowel elimination is not optimal as these are all a result of the body using alternative pathways to compensate.

There are two Gemmotherapy extracts I use in my practice for digestive disturbances in babies and over the next blog posts you will see how I employ them separately or together in babies depending on the circumstance. These two extracts are Fig and Walnut. Fig is known to support digestion from the mouth to the stomach. Walnut supports the large intestine creating a terrain that supports the development of healthy strains of bacteria.

Ella, being a c-section baby, had missed a healthy dose of good bacteria from her mother that babies gain in vaginal deliveries. Now that research has exploded on the microbiome of the body we know this is significant. Today I suggest the use of Walnut Gemmotherapy extract for all c-section babies to help build naturally what has been missed.

In Ella's case specifically I decided to use a combination of the two extracts due to her difficulty burping or releasing gas after feeding along with her infrequent elimination. I made a combination bottle of the two Gemmotherapy extracts for easy handling and instructed Ella's parents to give her four drops directly in her mouth right before nursing, 4x daily. Typically Gemmotherapy extracts are dosed in water but this can be complex for a young infant. In these cases, I generally advise the drops be given right on the tongue at the start of a feeding so they are washed from the mouth with breast milk.

Within one week, Ella was passing 2-3 stools a day and settling well into sleep. I suggested to her parents that after another week they taper the drops back to twice daily.

If there is no return of symptoms, then this would continue along for her first months of life supporting Ella's maturing digestive system with the benefits of Gemmotherapy.

Will Ella have a problem again? It might flare at another developmental stage. However, now her parents know what to look out for and have a safe and effective tool to use should future distress occur.

We're just getting started in this series and there is a lot more to discuss so be sure to check back next week to learn a protocol for acid reflux in infants. Has this sparked your interest in Gemmotherapy? You can learn more about this topic in my latest book *Building Immunity in Babies and Children*. Looking for a deeper dive into the uses of Gemmotherapy? Consider joining my upcoming *Foundation of Gemmotherapy Series*.