

## HIDDEN DANGERS OF MEDICATIONS

There are many medications and treatments that are helpful to your child, but some can be dangerous and even deadly. Just because you can buy them or they are prescribed doesn't make them safe.

**1. Teething medications:** (examples include Oragel<sup>®</sup>, Anbesol<sup>®</sup> and Humphries<sup>®</sup>)

These work by numbing the gums. The problem with these is they mix with saliva, then numb the throat. This diminishes a protective reflex and your baby may swallow saliva into their lungs. In addition, the lidocaine in Oragel<sup>®</sup>, for example, can be very harmful to your baby's heart if too much is swallowed. We recommend cold pacifiers, teething rings, clean washrags or your fingers.

**2. Pain relievers:** (examples include Tylenol<sup>®</sup> or Ibuprofen-Advil<sup>®</sup>/Motrin<sup>®</sup>)

DO NOT USE ANY OF THESE IN A CHILD UNDER 2 MONTHS OLD! In children this small, a fever (anything greater than 100.5 rectally) could be a sign of a serious illness. If a pain reliever is used this may mask the fever and we may miss the only warning sign before your baby gets really sick. If your baby has a fever, a doctor needs to see them.

**3. Colic remedies:** (examples include Humphries<sup>®</sup> or Levsin<sup>®</sup>)

The medical community still doesn't know what causes colic and there still is not a medical cure for it. Some medicines people give can stop the intestines from moving food along. As you can imagine, this can cause more serious problems. Some medications are mild and sold over the counter (Humphries<sup>®</sup>), some are more powerful and may only be given by a physician because they contain narcotics and other dangerous ingredients (Levsin<sup>®</sup>). We do not believe these medications should be given to our kids.

Knowing your babies colic symptoms will disappear on their own will hopefully keep you from causing more harm looking for a cure. Realize that your child will have no lasting impact from colic and that your baby's colic symptoms are not your fault.

Holding, rocking, rhythmic sound like washing machines and vacuum cleaners may help. You may also try car rides and baby massage or tummy rubbing. Many parents find using infant swings and vibrating infant seats helpful.

Most babies with colic do not have a formula allergy, but about 2-3% do. We don't normally recommend "formula jumping" because it doesn't work and becomes expensive and frustrating. But if your baby is bottle fed (don't change if breast feeding) and you think there may be an allergy, you may want to have a trial of a hypoallergenic formula like Nutramigen<sup>®</sup>, Pregestimil<sup>®</sup> or Alimetum<sup>®</sup>. Other signs of allergies include bloody diarrhea and eczema. If you don't see a change in 3 to 4 days, you may switch back to your original formula.

**4. Cold Medications:** DO NOT USE DECONGESTANTS (Like Pseudoephedrine<sup>®</sup>) IN CHILDREN LESS THAN 6 MONTHS OLD. Young children naturally have a fast heart rate. Decongestants speed up the heart, which is not good for babies.

**5. Vomiting/Diarrhea Suppositories:** (Phenergan<sup>®</sup>, Tigan<sup>®</sup> or Compazine<sup>®</sup>)

These must be given by a doctor. We do not recommend using these, but some emergency rooms give them out liberally. Most vomiting and diarrhea is serving a purpose, to rid the body of a toxin or virus. To stop this protective function would cause more harm in the long run. The second concern is there may be bad side effects, especially in children. So, if one of these is prescribed, please give us a call to discuss it.

**6. Enemas or Rectal Stimulation for Constipation:** Constipation is hard, formed stools. When babies poop, they grunt, cry and turn red. While some babies stool twelve times a day, some go every twelve days (that's O.K. if the baby is feeding well and acting well). While many nurses and some books will recommend rectal stimulation with a thermometer for constipation, we discourage this. Constipation can be a complicated disorder, and removing the stool at the exit may not alleviate the real problem. We need to work from the top down. We suggest dietary changes, for an infant, such as giving your baby 2-4 ounces per day of water for 3 to 4 days. You may also try apple or prune juice that is full strength. Only give small amounts of juice (2 to 4 ounces) at first, then increase the amount if needed until your baby has a soft stool. If this doesn't work, try one tablespoon of Karo<sup>®</sup> syrup in the water for 3 to 4 days.

**7. Baby Powder:** Many people use powder for diaper rashes. While this may irritate the skin, our main concern is that the dust cloud of powder forms around your child, they may breath some into their lungs. We recommend a thick, sticky cream that will act as a barrier between the skin and urine and stool, such as Desitin<sup>®</sup>, Balmex<sup>®</sup> or Zinc Oxide<sup>®</sup>.

**8. One Table or Teaspoon of The Following Can Kill Your Child:**

Bengay<sup>®</sup>  
Icy Hot<sup>®</sup>  
Blistex<sup>®</sup>  
Vicks<sup>®</sup>  
Camphophenique<sup>®</sup>  
Visine<sup>®</sup>  
Oragel<sup>®</sup> or Anbesol<sup>®</sup>  
Lanacaine Spray<sup>®</sup>  
Lomotil<sup>®</sup>  
Quinine<sup>®</sup>

**Please keep all medications locked or out of reach from little hands.**

**Do not put nonfood items, such as oil, cleaners, or gasoline, in food containers.**

**Keep the poison control phone number on your phone: 602-253-3334**