

ALLERGIC PROCTOCOLITIS

Proctocolitis (prok-toe-co-LIE-tis) is inflammation of the lower part of the intestines (the colon). If this swelling is caused by an allergic reaction, it is called *Allergic Proctocolitis*. Allergic Proctocolitis in infants is also called Milk/Soy Protein Intolerance, Dietary Protein-Induced Proctocolitis, or protein hypersensitivity.

What are the Symptoms of Allergic Proctocolitis?

The main symptom of Allergic Proctocolitis (AP) is mucus with visible specks or streaks of blood in dirty diapers (stools). The stools may be watery, and they are often green. Many infants with AP are very fussy. It is not uncommon for families to be told their baby has colic. Bouts of crying (day and night), poor sleep, and obvious discomfort after eating can be a part of AP too. Some babies with AP have skin rashes.

What Causes Allergic Proctocolitis?

AP is caused by an allergic reaction to food proteins that pass through a baby's colon. These food proteins may come from formula, but, if you are breastfeeding, the proteins pass into your breast milk from the foods you eat. At least half of all cases of AP are caused by a reaction to cow's milk (dairy) proteins. Soy protein is the second most common cause, and many babies have a problem with both dairy *and* soy. Any food protein can cause an allergic reaction. At this time, no one knows why some babies get AP.

How is Allergic Proctocolitis Diagnosed?

The best way to diagnose Allergic Proctocolitis is to remove the suspected protein from the baby's diet and see if he or she starts to feel better. Your baby's doctor should first rule out other conditions, and may want to test samples of your baby's stool or blood.

What is the Treatment for Allergic Proctocolitis?

The treatment for Allergic Proctocolitis (AP) is to avoid the food(s) that cause the problem. If you are breastfeeding, you will need to stop eating foods that bother your baby. This is called an *elimination diet*. If your baby takes formula, the doctor can recommend a formula that will be better for your baby. Dairy and soy proteins are usually the first to be removed.

How long will it take for my baby to feel better?

Many babies will stop bleeding as soon as 2 or 3 days after you remove the offending protein(s). It can take 1 to 2 months for all symptoms to go away. If you are not seeing ANY improvement after 2 weeks on an elimination diet, see your doctor or a Registered Dietitian about removing a different protein. Most babies grow out of AP by their first birthday.