

## Colic - Is it really just a fussy baby?

By Kristi Wees

Oh, what is a parent to do? Your bouncing baby is miserable and cries all the time. Nothing seems to work to soothe the little bundle. This isn't anything like what you thought parenthood would be like! Then during a well check the pediatrician utters the words... "Maybe it is COLIC."

Uhhhhm, what did you say?

In 1954 the criterion that was used to tell a parent their child had colic was known as the Wessel criteria and was "diagnosed" if the baby was crying and fussing more than:

- 3 hours per day.
- 3 days a week.
- 3 weeks.

Well, to say we have come a long way from those days may be an understatement - or is it?

When my own daughter's hours of crying were dismissed as "colic", I set out to figure out just what this mysterious diagnosis meant. I met a doctor, Dr. Bryan Vartabedian, who had written a book called, "*Colic Solved*" (2007, Ballantine Books). Dr. V, as he is

affectionately known by his patients, is a well known pediatric gastroenterologist at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, TX. In this book, Dr. V introduces the



idea that in a colicky baby, "something physical may be in fact wrong" causing a baby to cry so much. With estimates of one in five babies having unexplained irritability, you can imagine that Dr. V's advice is invaluable to sleep-deprived parents.

Dr. V paints a clear case on why a baby can't have colic as a diagnosis and quickly introduces the idea that reflux or gastroesophageal reflux (GERD) may be an underlying cause. He provides a Reflux 101 chapter with a great mini anatomy lesson in GERD, including explanations of motility and LES (the lower esophageal sphincter: a "valve" of sorts right before the stomach).

He provides a wonderful list called "7 signs of reflux in your baby." After checking the list, I had an *a-ha* moment when I realized my child had six of the seven signs!! It was this list that I took to our pediatrician appointment, armed and ready to advocate for my little screaming baby.

"Unexplained screaming and colicky behavior may once have been passed off as a speed bump of infancy, but we now know that it may be an indicator of underlying problems." - Dr. Vartabedian, *Colic Solved*

Dr. V does not stop with just GERD, but discusses the "other colic": milk protein allergy. Dr. V describes the

## Healthy Family Day at Children's Museum of Pittsburgh Saturday, July 30, 2016



Join us to kick-start your family on a journey toward health and wellness! Visit activity stations throughout the museum which are based on the following themes:

- **Interact creatively together:** Experience clay modeling, silk screening, and woodworking crafts.
- **Be physically active:** Join a family dance party and indoor recess games.
- **Make nutritious food choices:** Learn about farm-to-table and garden harvesting.
- **Explore healthy emotions:** Play and learn in the new Daniel Tiger exhibit.

- **Understand health resources:** Learn how you can support your child's growth and development.
- **Enjoy games, giveaways, and more!**

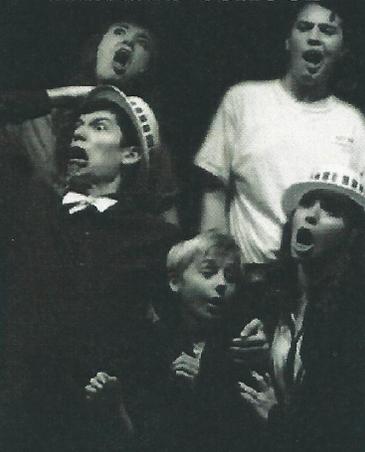
Regular admission fees apply. Visit [www.pittsburghkids.org](http://www.pittsburghkids.org) for more information. UPMC Health Plan members get 50% off admission, up to four tickets.

*This event is part of UPMC MyHealth Community, a wellness initiative of UPMC Health Plan.*

children's  
museum  
PITTSBURGH

UPMC HEALTH PLAN

**ACT ONE**  
THEATRE SCHOOL

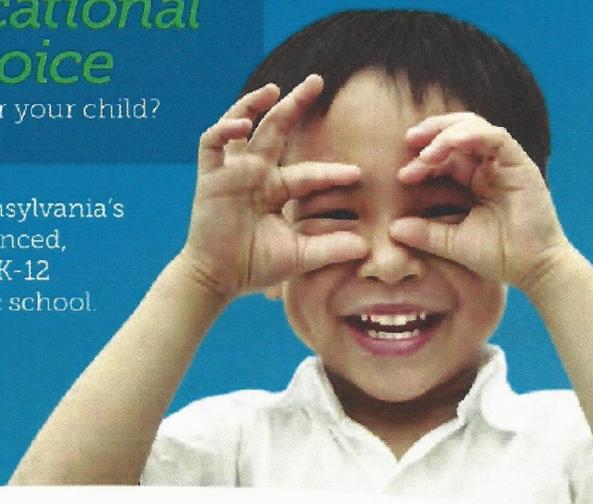


**Summer Camp**  
**June 13 - July 8**

actonets@aol.com  
www.actonetheatreschool.com

Looking to make  
**the best educational choice**  
for your child?

Choose Pennsylvania's most experienced, tuition-free, K-12 online public school.



 **PAcyber**  
The Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School

*The Learning Never Stops*  
**PAcyber.org**

symptoms, testing and possible solutions for milk protein allergy, as well as the "why" behind it all. He promotes breast milk as best for a fussy baby, with modifications to mom's diet if a milk allergy is at play.

One chapter offers practical advice for things a parent can try, from positioning, to burping, to rice cereal recommendations. The illustrations in this chapter go a long way to describing what may be going on inside your baby's tummy. Reflux medications are also described in great detail, but only as a last resort after all other more natural solutions have been evaluated.

So for all the sleep-deprived parents out there whose pediatrician (or mother-in-law or great aunt) has told you your baby has COLIC, I encourage you to do a little research and find out what else might be going on with your little bundle (who is supposed to be filled with JOY)... because there are things you can actually DO to help your child become a happier baby on the block! ■

*Kristi Wees is a pediatric patient advocate who lives and works in Gibsonia. She can be reached at kristi@EmpoweredAdvocacy.com*

**ALLEGHENY ALL-STAR BASKETBALL CAMPS**

**Learn from local coaches & players with experience in the NBA, NCAA & WPIAL**

**Boyce Park - August 8&9**  
**North Park - August 10&11**  
**South Park - August 15&16**

All camps open to ages 10-17 with separate divisions for boys & girls. Camps meet daily 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

**Enrollment fee of \$30 (\$38 for non-residents) includes a T-shirt and daily pool pass**

**Register at [alleghenycounty.us/parkprograms](http://alleghenycounty.us/parkprograms)**

 **Allegheny Alerts**    
[alleghenycounty.us/alerts](http://alleghenycounty.us/alerts)

 **RAD works here**  
Allegheny County District