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Raising Healthy, Happy Children

Each almost 44,000 children are born in B.C. Raising our children comes with a steep learning curve and parents are always trying to do “what’s best.” Now, evidence is emerging that what many use to clean up kids – from diapering little bottoms to wiping sticky faces and fingers – may be at the root of some mysterious rashes. A preservative frequently used in “wet wipes” seems to be inducing an allergic reaction that resolves once the wipes are discontinued. If you are stymied by just such an issue, try dropping the wipes!

Breast is best! Evidence? A long-term study recently published found a link between breastfeeding and higher scores in cognition, language and motor development. It showed that any amount of breastfeeding lead to improvement, but the best results were obtained when infants were breastfed six months or more. Researchers noted, however, that they were disappointed in overall breastfeeding rates; only 30 percent of mothers were still breastfeeding at four months. There are a variety of community services to support new mothers with breastfeeding their infants.

Infant colic is a frustrating condition that can leave parents at their wit’s end and seems to be related to gastro-intestinal distress. In Italy, probiotics are being studied as a means to prevent colic, as well as regurgitation and constipation. They have obtained some positive results with a specific probiotic administered as drops during the first three months of life. Once colic is established, however, there does not seem to be any benefit. This is when understanding the Period of Purple Crying can be helpful, check out www.dontshake.ca for practical help.

Preliminary research in autism is pointing to another potential use for probiotics. Gastro-intestinal influences of the manifestation of autism may have been underappreciated, and now research is finding that the use of a specific probiotic actually eases the behaviours associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder and many of its associated GI symptoms. This points the way to both a better understanding of autism and potential therapies.

Raising a family can be a complicated endeavour in these times, but talking to your pharmacist can help you wade through the information and extract the information that is sound – and helpful!