



## INFANT REFLUX

### What is reflux?

The effortless loss of one or two mouthfuls of stomach contents, otherwise known as “spitting up”. Milk just rolls out of the mouth, often with a burp. Frequently occurs shortly after feedings. More than half of all infants spit up to some degree.

Babies spit up because the ring of muscle at the top of the stomach doesn't close very well. Spitting up is usually worst at 3-4 months of age, then improves on it's own as the ring of muscle starts working better over the first year of life.

### How can I help my child?

- Feed smaller amounts  
Overfeeding always makes reflux worse. If the stomach is completely full, spitting up is more likely. If your baby is gaining weight well, give him smaller amounts at each feeding (at least 1 ounce less than what you have been giving). If your baby is having trouble gaining weight, make sure to decrease the amount of time between feeds to compensate for the smaller amounts.
- Avoid pressure on your child's stomach  
Avoid tight diapers. Don't let people play roughly with your baby right after meals.
- Burp your child well  
Burp your baby 2-3 times during each feeding, for one minute or less each time. Also, cut back on pacifier time. Constant sucking can fill the stomach with air.
- Keep your child in an upright position after meals  
After a feeding, keep your child in an upright position using a swing, carseat, or bouncy seat for 30 minutes.
- Use a proper sleep position  
Most babies with reflux can still sleep on their backs (the recommended position to reduce the risk of SIDS). Notify your doctor if your child is choking or having breathing problems.
- Add rice cereal to formula  
If your baby is still spitting up large amounts after you have tried the above suggestions, you can try thickening the formula with rice cereal. Add 1 level teaspoon of rice cereal to each ounce of formula. You may need to make the bottle nipple hole larger. Alternatively, give your child a formula specifically intended for babies who reflux, such as Enfamil AR.
- Acid blockers or liquid antacids if recommended by your doctor  
Most infants who spit up do not need medicine. However, if your child has significant pain from heartburn, or is spitting up enough that weight gain is a problem, your doctor may opt for medication to control the reflux until your baby is older.

### When should I call my child's healthcare provider?

Call IMMEDIATELY if:

- You see blood or bile (green color) in the spit-up material
- Spitting up causes your child to choke or cough

Call during office hours if:

- Your baby doesn't seem to improve with the above approach
- Your baby isn't gaining weight normally
- You have other questions or concerns