

Your Newborn and Spit Up

Gastroesophageal reflux (GER) – spit up. Milk dribbles without force out of your baby's mouth, and sometimes her nose too. Can be a teaspoon to a generous tablespoon. This is regarded as physiologic (normal). It may peak at 2-4 months and may be outgrown around 7-8 months. Not all the milk traveling up the esophagus may reach your baby's mouth. You may see your baby swallowing or sounding as if some liquid is in her throat.

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) – heartburn. Around 3-4 weeks some babies start fussing during and after some feeds. Parents notice baby seems conflicted, pulling on and off breast or bottle appearing agitated. If you see this behavior please check with your baby's physician.

Vomiting – forceful expulsion of most or all of the stomach contents. An occasional vomit in an otherwise healthy newborn is not a cause for concern. Make sure your baby is well-hydrated by monitoring wet diapers.

Here are some ideas for **reducing spit up**.

- If you give a bottle make sure baby is sipping and not gulping. A baby who eats too quickly may spit up heavily or even vomit, and then want to feed again.
- Position your baby for feeds such that his head is higher than his hips, diagonally across your chest for breastfeeding and sitting up for a bottle.
- After a good meal avoid bending her forward at her waist. Pick burp positions that keep her body elongated.
- If you need to change a diaper at the end of the meal do so without lifting baby's legs. Instead roll him to expose the buttocks for cleaning. You can also elevate the head-end of the changing table with, for example, 5-oz tuna cans.
- Gentle patting is sufficient to help your baby burp. Some parents massage baby's back, perhaps with an upward motion. Vigorous patting can cause heavier spitting up.
- Try to avoid having to put baby in the car seat immediately after feeding. Car seats flex babies at the hips and put pressure on the stomach.
- Handle your baby as you would a cup filled to the brim. Move him slowly, and keep him upright for 10-20 minutes after feeding.
- Sometimes food sensitivities (perhaps to cow's milk and dairy products) increase spitting up. If your baby is spitting up what seems like too much (discuss with your baby's physician) try eliminating dairy from mother's diet.