



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

Gastro esophageal Reflux

Gastroesophageal (gas-tro-e-sof-uh-g-ull) reflux is when the food or stomach acid in the stomach comes back up your child's esophagus (e-sof-uh-gus). The esophagus is the tube that takes food from the mouth to the stomach. Reflux is most common in infants (less than 1 year old), but can occur at any age.

What is the cause?

There is a muscle, called a sphincter (sh-fink-ter), on at the bottom of your child's esophagus. This muscle normally opens to let food into the stomach and closes to keep food and stomach acid in. Your child may have a problem with this muscle that can cause symptoms.

What are the symptoms?

The signs and symptoms may be different for each child. Some of the most common signs and symptoms are listed below. Most of these symptoms will usually occur right after eating.

- Vomiting (can be forceful)
- Belching
- Stomach pain
- Choking
- Hiccups
- Heartburn (pain or burning in the chest)
- Coughing
- Sore throats in AM
- Crying more than usual
- Decreased appetite
- More irritable or fussy

How do I know if my child has reflux?

Your child may have a special x-ray called a barium swallow. Your child will be given a pink liquid to drink called barium. This helps the throat and esophagus show up better on x-ray. Your child will be on a table while x-ray pictures are taken with a large camera. A barium swallow takes about 15 to 45 minutes. Your doctor will tell you what the x-ray picture shows.

Your child may also need a pH probe test if there is reflux. A small tube is placed into your child's esophagus through the nose. The tube is connected to a machine that records the amount of acid in your child's esophagus. This helps the doctor to understand how often your child refluxes what actions can be taken to help your child feel better.

You can help your child to feel better and decrease the chance of vomiting by following the following instructions once you are home.

Important instructions for Infants:

- Make sure your baby is comfortable before feeding.
- Feed smaller amounts but feed more often so your child will get enough.
- Feed slowly holding your baby upright.
- Burp your baby often during the feedings.
- Handle your baby gently after the feeding.
- Place babies on their sides with the head of the bed raised. Ask your nurse for ways to keep your baby from sliding down in bed.
- You may be asked to thicken feedings with rice cereal (1-2 tablespoons/4 oz.)
- Give medicine as ordered.

Older Children and Teenagers should AVOID:

- Greasy and spicy foods, citrus products, mints, and foods or drinks with caffeine or chocolate
- Carbonated drinks
- Eating right before bedtime.

Also, older children and teenagers should use two or three pillows instead of one when sleeping

Call Your Doctor if:

- Vomiting becomes more severe or frequent
- Medicine is vomited two days in a row

Also Call Your Doctor if your child:

- Is very fussy
- Has problems breathing during or after feedings.
- Has choking spells
- Will not take feedings

Speak up if you have any questions or concerns

