



Wyoming
Department
of Health

Commit to your health.

Wyoming Healthy Together Program
1-888-545-1710 | www.WYHealthyTogether.com



Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) in Infants

GERD stands for gastroesophageal reflux disease. You may also hear it called “acid indigestion” or “heartburn.” It happens when food from the stomach flows back up (refluxes) into the **esophagus** (the tube that connects the mouth to the stomach). GERD is common in infants. In fact, over 50% of babies have GERD during their first 3 months. Babies with GERD will often “spit up” after being fed. They may sometime spit up when coughing or crying. They may also be fussy during or after feeding. Babies often stop having GERD when they are about 12 to 18 months old.

How to Know Whether GERD Is a Problem

If a baby is happy and gaining weight normally, GERD is likely not causing harm. However, certain symptoms can be signs of a more serious problem. Tell your healthcare provider if the baby has any of the following symptoms:

- Blood, or green or yellow fluid in vomit.
- Poor weight gain or growth.
- Persistent refusal to eat.
- Trouble eating or swallowing.
- Breathing problems (wheezing, persistent cough, trouble breathing).
- Waking up at night coughing or wheezing.



**Hold the baby upright
for a time after feeding
to help prevent
spitting up.**

Helping Your Child Feel Better

Your baby will likely outgrow GERD. To help reduce GERD and spitting up in the meantime, the following changes can help:

- Feed the baby smaller but more frequent meals. (Don’t feed the baby again if he or she spits up. Wait until the next mealtime.)
- Feed babies in an upright position.
- Burp your baby gently after each breast, or after 1–2 ounces of a bottle.
- Keep babies in a seated or upright position for at least 30 minutes after meals.
- For bottle-fed babies, ask your doctor about thickening the breast milk or formula.
- Avoid tight waistbands and diapers.
- Keep tobacco smoke away from the baby.

What Your Healthcare Provider Can Do

If your child has more serious symptoms of GERD, your doctor or nurse will work with you to help relieve them. Your healthcare provider may suggest some changes in addition to the ones above (such as raising the head of the crib or trying different formula). Medications are sometimes prescribed. In certain cases, tests may be done to help be sure of the cause of the baby’s symptoms.