

GERD in Infants

How Symptoms Differ from Adults

GER: Gastroesophageal Reflux



- Stomach contents move back into the esophagus; “spit-up”
- Common in babies under 12 months¹ due to underdeveloped muscles

GERD: Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease

- More serious; interferes with feeding, growth & comfort



Infant GERD vs Adult GERD

• Infant GERD



- Frequent spit-up (6+ times/day)
- Back arching or crying during/after feeds
- Poor feeding
- Waking, discomfort lying flat
- Coughing, gagging, wheezing
- Frequent respiratory infections
- Silent GERD for infants may be possible; no visible spit-up, but baby has signs of pain

• Adult GERD



- Heartburn, sour taste
- Chest pain after meals
- Avoiding trigger foods
- Sleep disruption
- Chronic cough, hoarseness
- Silent GERD less common, but possible

GERD in Breastfed Babies:

- Spit-up after each feeding
- Hiccups, gulping, irritability, pulling off breast
- Symptoms may worsen when mother has caffeine or dairy*

*Talk to your healthcare provider before eliminating from diet



AT-HOME MANAGEMENT TIPS:

- Keep baby upright 20-30 mins after feeding
- Feed smaller amounts more frequently
- Burp during and after feeding

YOUR DOCTOR MAY RECOMMEND:

- Trial of acid-reducing medication
- Trial of thickened or hypoallergenic formula
- Referral to pediatric or GI specialist

WHEN TO SEEK HELP:

- Projective vomiting
- Green/yellow vomit or blood in vomit
- Vomiting begins after 6mo or persists beyond 1 year
- Discomfort, weight loss or poor growth

NOTES:

- GERD improves with age, sitting, and eating solid foods
- Most babies outgrow GER by age 1²
- Many “colicky” babies may actually have GERD; consult a pediatrician for diagnosis



By recognizing the signs, parents and health providers can help ensure babies grow and thrive.