

Reflux in Infants

What is reflux?

Reflux occurs when the stomach contents are brought back up into the oesophagus. This happens if the valve at the top of the stomach, which normally stops the contents going back up again, is not working properly. Bringing up small amounts of milk is very common in babies and is not usually a problem. In the majority of babies reflux resolves by 12 months of age.

What is GOR?

If milk and stomach acid is brought up from the stomach it may feel painful and cause heartburn, and in some cases it may lead to the oesophagus becoming sore and inflamed. This is called gastro-oesophageal reflux (GOR).

How can I manage my child's reflux?

Feeding

- Continue to breastfeed where possible. Otherwise continue with your baby's usual formula.
- A baby's formula should not be changed unless advised by their doctor or dietitian.

Change in feeding pattern

- Health professionals have previously recommended giving smaller, more frequent feeds for babies with reflux. There is little evidence to support this and even some evidence to suggest that this may make reflux worse.

Feed thickening

- Reflux in some babies is improved by using a thickening agent to help decrease the amount of milk coming back up the oesophagus.
- Karicare Aptamil Feed Thickener® is the recommended thickener for infants.
- For breastfed babies, thickener can be mixed with a small amount of cool boiled water or expressed breast milk and fed as a gel before, during or directly after the breastfeed.
- Alternatively, thickener can be added to expressed breast milk or formula to give the required consistency (see directions for mixing on the tin).

Posture

- Try keeping your baby upright during and after feeds. Prop them up on a pillow for play and nappy changes.
- Keep your baby quiet after feeds and avoid bouncing them around.

Medication

- Some infants may require medicines to help manage reflux. These medicines work by decreasing acid production and need to be prescribed by a doctor.

When should my baby see a doctor?

If your baby is otherwise healthy, they do not need any special treatment. However, follow-up with your doctor is recommended for any of the following:

- Excessive vomiting and lack of weight gain
- Vomiting of blood
- Complaining of pain or being unsettled following meal times
- Choking, gagging or coughing from the reflux

Name and Phone: