

Children's Emergency Department

Gastro-oesophageal reflux - parent/carer discharge information



Gastro-oesophageal reflux occurs when stomach contents are brought back up into the oesophagus (throat or gullet). Reflux happens when the muscle in the lower part of the oesophagus (called the lower sphincter muscle) relaxes. The tone of this muscle is naturally lower at night and some babies will only suffer symptoms at night or on lying down.

All children experience reflux at some time, particularly after meals - at 4 months of age, nearly 7 in 10 babies have reflux. Some babies have more reflux than others – it does not mean that anything is wrong. It occurs spontaneously, and unlike vomiting is effortless. Some doctors consider regurgitation to be just another name for reflux. However, most doctors believe this term should be used for when babies reflux stomach contents into their mouth.

Reflux usually stops by about 12 months of age. It does not normally harm your baby and is very unlikely to cause problems in later life.

What should I do now?

- If your baby is prescribed Gaviscon then use as directed by the instructions on the packet.
- If advised by the doctor, then try propping your baby's moses basket or cot head up. Always put your baby to sleep on his/her back with feet to the foot of the cot.



Patient Information

When should I seek medical advice?

- Regurgitating or vomiting blood or yellow/green fluid (bile)
- Passing blood in the poo or black tar-like poo
- Choking, gagging or coughing from the reflux, especially if accompanied or followed by breathing difficulties or blueness around the mouth
- Vomiting large amounts or frequently and/or not gaining weight
- Baby is clearly in pain or is unsettled, especially after meals
- Refusing to eat/drink
- Persistent regurgitation after 12 to 18 months of age

For further advice/information:

- Call 111 (24 hours a day)
- Contact your GP

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please ask and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet, please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

Document History

Department:	CED
Contact:	26934
Updated:	December 2022
Review:	December 2025
Version:	4
Reference:	HIC/LFT/1751/13