

Spitting Up

*Spitting up is common occurrence during infancy. Sometimes spitting up means the baby has eaten more than her stomach can hold; sometimes she spits up while burping or drooling. Although it may be a bit messy, it's usually **no cause for concern**. It almost never involves choking, coughing, discomfort, or danger to your child, even if it occurs while she's sleeping.*

Some babies spit up more than others, but most are out of this phase by the time they are sitting. A few "heavy spitters" will continue until they start to walk or are weaned to a cup. Some may continue throughout their first year.

It is important to know the difference between normal spitting up and true vomiting. Unlike spitting up, which most babies don't even seem to notice, vomiting is forceful and usually causes great distress and discomfort for your child. It generally occurs soon after a meal and produces a much greater volume than spitting up. Spitting up on the other hand is the easy flow of stomach contents out of the mouth, frequently with a burp.

How to help your baby

While it is practically impossible to prevent all spitting up, the following steps will help you decrease the frequency of these episodes and the amount spit up.

- Make each feeding calm, quiet, and leisurely.
- Avoid interruptions, sudden noises, bright lights, and other distractions during feedings.
- If your baby is bottlefed, give smaller amounts per feeding (1 ounce less than you have been. Also, keep the total feeding time to less than 20 minutes. You can also try to wait at least 2 ½ hours between feedings.
- If your baby is breastfed, try nursing on one side per feed and pump the other side. Alternate sides you start on. You can also wait at least 2 hours between feedings.
- Burp your bottle-fed baby at least **every three to five minutes** during feedings.
- Avoid feeding while your infant is lying down.
- Hold the baby in an upright position for **20 to 30 minutes after** each feeding.
- Do not jostle or play vigorously with the baby immediately after feeding.
- Avoid tight diapers. It puts added pressure on the stomach.
- Try to feed her before she gets frantically hungry.
- If bottle-feeding, make sure the hole in the nipple is neither too big (which lets the formula flow too fast) nor too small (which frustrates your baby and causes her to gulp air). If the hole is the proper size, a few drops should come out when you invert the bottle, and then stop.
- Elevate the head of the entire crib with blocks (don't use a pillow) and put her to sleep on her back. This keeps her head higher than her stomach and prevents her from choking in case she spits up while sleeping.

Adapted from www.kidshealth.org and www.healthychildren.org