



# MID-JERSEY PEDIATRICS

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## **GASTROESOPHAGEAL REFLUX (G.E.R.)**

The esophagus is the tube leading from the mouth to the stomach. A muscle at the lower end of the esophagus should close after food is swallowed and has entered the stomach. Gastroesophageal Reflux (G.E.R.) occurs when this muscle is loose and does not close, or when it opens at the wrong time. When this happens, formula and stomach acid can come back up into the esophagus and may be vomited. This can cause irritation of the esophagus, and may lead to breathing problems or failure to gain weight. Most children who have reflux are healthy and do not have other complications related to the reflux. Reflux is usually outgrown by 1 year of age.

### **TREATMENT OF REFLUX**

#### **Feeding Techniques**

Feeding your baby thickened formula may help decrease the reflux. To thicken the formula, add 1 teaspoon of baby cereal (rice, oatmeal, or barley) to each ounce of formula. (NOTE: For some brands you may need to use slightly more or less cereal.) Because the formula will be thicker, you will need to make a bigger hole in the nipple of the bottle with a clean needle or scissors. You can also purchase tri-cut baby nipples which will allow the thickened formula to pass easier. Hold your baby in an upright position during feeding time. **Do not prop the bottle.** Burp your baby after every 1 to 2 ounces of feeding. Be careful not to press on your baby's stomach or bend him/her at the waist while you are burping him/her. Do not overfeed your baby. If necessary, give smaller, more frequent feedings every 3 to 4 hours.

#### **MEDICATIONS**

Your doctor may prescribe medicine to treat your baby's reflux. If so, you will be instructed about the medicine.

#### **POSITIONING AND ACTIVITY**

Discuss your baby's sleeping position with the doctor. Some babies with G.E.R. may benefit from being in a prone position for 1 to 2 hours after each feeding and while sleeping at night. When holding your baby, do not shake, jiggle, or rock them for the first 2 hours after feedings. Plan activity or play time in the 2-hour period before a feeding whenever possible.

#### **Call your child's doctor if any of the following occurs:**

- \* If your baby loses weight or fails to gain weight.
- \* If there are streaks of blood in your baby's vomit.
- \* If your child has difficulty breathing, coughing after feeding, gagging, or fever.
- \* If your baby seems to be in pain.
- \* If your baby appears to be dehydrated (dry mouth, sunken eyes, sunken soft spot, very little urine output).