



## GASTROESOPHAGEAL REFLUX (GERD)

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a common condition in infants and children. In children with GER, food or drink in the stomach comes back up through the esophagus more easily. Therefore these children are likely to experience more vomiting or spitting than the average child, as well as symptoms of gagging, heartburn, irritability and difficulty swallowing.

Babies and children with GERD can have breathing difficulties including wheezing in the lungs. At times, infants with GER will have episodes called apnea, where they actually stop breathing.

### **Treatment of GERD:**

A stepwise approach to the treatment of GERD is best, beginning with effective interventions that are least likely to cause side effects. Babies generally will outgrow GERD by the time they are 9 to 12 months old, often sooner.

The following measures would be most appropriate for your child:

#### **A) Thickened Feedings:**

Please add **two teaspoons** of rice cereals for **every one ounce** of formula.

You can gradually increase it up to three teaspoons of rice cereals for every one ounce of formula.

Be sure to stir well. It is usually necessary to enlarge the nipple hole a little to allow the baby to suck the cereal through the hole.

For breast fed babies under 3 months old, it is not possible to use thickened feeds unless mother wants to pump breast milk into a bottle and add the cereal.

#### **B) Anti reflux positioning:**

The baby should be held straight upright on parent's shoulder for 25 minutes after a feeding, to allow the feeding to pass through the stomach.

**C) Elevate head end of the crib** by approximately 30 degrees. So baby's head is at higher position than legs. Make sure the back / mattress does not sink in.

D) Do not use swings, bouncing sit. They make reflux worse.

E) Babies with reflux should not take more than 4 or 5 oz at one time with a bottle, as higher volumes predispose to more reflux.

### **2) Medications:**

Medications can be helpful for babies who have significant GER symptoms which do not respond to thickened feedings and anti-reflux positioning. Medications can also be helpful in babies who have breathing difficulties related to reflux.