

Infant Reflux/Regurgitation

Reflux describes the backwards flow of stomach contents into the oesophagus (the pipe that connects the throat and stomach), which may result in regurgitation. In some babies the regurgitation may appear as spitting up and other babies may be sick (vomit) after feeds.

Reflux is very common. It affects nearly half (at least 4 out of 10) of babies younger than 1 year. It is a normal process in infants, and babies that vomit after feeds will usually thrive and gain weight. Vomiting usually starts before 8 weeks of age, peaks at 4-6 months of age and improves by 12 months. It can happen a lot – some babies bring up milk 6 or more times a day.

If your baby is not distressed by being sick, is happy and gaining weight well and has plenty of wet nappies then your baby will not need any medical treatment. If you are unsure whether your baby is gaining weight then you should contact your health visiting team on **01709 423333**, to find out how to get your baby weighed.

If your baby is breastfeeding and has reflux you can still continue to breast feed. If you require any breast feeding support, contact **01709 423333** for advice from the **infant feeding team**.

If your baby is formula feeding ensure that you are giving your baby the right amount of formula for their age as directed on the infant formula packaging. There is no need to try lots of different formulas – a standard stage 1 infant formula is suitable from birth until 1 year of age. If you require support with bottle feeding, contact **01709 423333** for advice from the **health visiting team**.

In most cases of reflux the baby is healthy and happy and the baby gains weight well. Occasionally some babies will have distress with the vomiting and will cry frequently, they may have difficulties with feeding or not want to feed or they may not gain weight very well. These babies may be diagnosed with having Gastro-oesophageal Reflux Disease (GORD) and may require treatment.

When to take your baby back to the healthcare professional/GP or call 111.

- If the regurgitation becomes more forceful. This is also known as 'projectile vomiting', and is when the vomit is expelled with such force that it lands some distance away.
- If your baby brings up milk that is green or yellow-ish green (it could be bile, a bitter fluid that helps digestion), or if it looks as though it has blood in it.
- If your baby has any new problems or if things get worse – such as if he or she won't stop crying or is very distressed, if your baby can't feed, if he or she stops putting on weight, or if reflux is still a problem in a baby older than 1 year.