

Baby reflux

Reflux

Possetting – where your baby regurgitates a little milk after a feed – is quite common. But whilst some regurgitation is expected in babies, when regurgitation is excessive and occurs frequently with larger amounts of food being brought back up, it could be a sign that your baby has reflux. And although around half of younger babies experience reflux, after 10 months this number drops down to about one in twenty babies.

Remember that both possetting and reflux are different from actual vomiting; whereas vomiting involves forceful heaving, possetting requires no effort or force.

What causes reflux?

The lower esophageal sphincter, or LES, is the muscle which acts like a valve to stop food from coming back up our oesophagus from our stomach. Babies are born with a weak LES, so are less able to keep their food down than older infants or adults. During the first year of a baby's life, this valve mechanism will gradually become stronger as they develop, thus decreasing the occurrence of reflux.

What to do if your baby has reflux

Babies with reflux may regurgitate milk after feeding and experience minor discomfort in their oesophagus which can make them cough a little. As long as your baby is otherwise well and healthy, reflux is rarely problematic. Keeping a cloth or tissue handy to catch their milk 'possets' can make feeding that little bit less messy.

Feeding your baby in an upright position, not laying them down straight after feeds and trying smaller but more frequent feeds can also help to minimise episodes of reflux.

However, speak to your midwife or health visitor if:

- the reflux is happening regularly, particularly more than five times a day
- your baby cries excessively after feeding
- they are vomiting regularly
- are coughing on a regular basis
- they're not quite themselves and don't seem to be thriving

If you'd like to ask a question about your baby's feeding habits, why not ask our team? They're available on **08457 623 628**, Monday to Friday, 8am - 8pm or online via Live Chat, Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm.