



Feeding issues: Spitting up

As your baby's stomach grows and their digestive system matures, the rate and frequency of spit-up will decrease. Actually, your baby will likely outgrow spitting up around the time they can sit up, but it can keep happening through the first year in some babies.

Tips to help reduce spit-up:

- Don't wait too long—feed your baby before they are too hungry to reduce the chance that they will eat too much or too quickly.
- Feedings should be calm and quiet. Watch for fullness cues.
- Burp your baby about 2 to 3 times (or about every five minutes) during each feeding. Burping your baby upright on your lap can help decrease pressure on their tummy.
- Tilt the bottle so formula or breastmilk, not air, fills the nipple. If your baby is breastfed, make sure your baby is properly latching on to the nipple to prevent taking in air.
- Hold your baby in an upright position (their head should be higher than their abdomen) for 20 to 30 minutes after each feeding, avoiding vigorous play.
- Slightly elevate the head of the entire crib with stable blocks to help keep their head higher than their abdomen.

The difference between spit-up and vomiting

It's never pretty when anyone is sick, and it can be especially stressful when that person is so tiny and in need of care. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) defines vomiting as “forceful throwing up of stomach contents through the mouth” compared to spit-up, which they define as “easy flow of stomach contents out of the mouth, frequently with a burp.” Vomiting can be a sign of a minor feeding concern or it could indicate a more serious issue. Either way it's important to consult your doctor.

Vomiting can be caused by a number of issues including food allergy and gastrointestinal reflux disease (GERD), but it is most often the result of a virus. While most viruses resolve on their own in a couple of days, they can be serious if they involve vomiting and diarrhea, which can lead to dehydration—a big deal for your small baby.

When to call your doctor

- Vomiting occurs repeatedly or is unusually forceful.
- Green or yellowish color.
- Accompanies fever or diarrhea.
- Your baby seems to be choking when vomiting.