

Children's Health

How Reflux Affects Kids

(NAPSA)—According to the Children's Digestive Health and Nutrition Foundation (CDHNF), gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is not only an adult problem, but one that can affect the health of your teen, your child and even your baby. Reflux occurs when food and acid come back from the stomach into the esophagus. Reflux can burn the lining of the esophagus, get into lungs or damage enamel on teeth.

Spitting up affects more than half of all babies less than six months of age but over 98% of infants get better by one year of age. However, if your child has reflux symptoms that persist beyond 18 months of age, you should discuss these problems with your child's pediatrician or pediatric gastroenterologist.

Things you can do include minimizing or eliminating smoking. In addition:

For infants:

- Discuss thickening cereal with your physician
- Avoid overfeeding

For older children:

- Eat smaller meals more often
- Avoid eating 2-3 hours before bedtime
- Elevate the head of the bed
- Avoid carbonated drinks, chocolate, caffeine and foods that are high in fat



Treatment for GERD is usually based on the severity of symptoms and includes diet and lifestyle changes and sometimes medication or even surgery in the most extreme cases.

To learn more about GERD, visit CDHNF at www.KidsAcidReflux.org or www.cdhnf.org.