

NANCY WORTHINGTON, M.D.  
JYOTI BUDANIA, M.D.  
PRIYANKA VYAS, M.D.

WORTHINGTON PEDIATRICS  
5528 NW 43<sup>RD</sup> Street  
Gainesville, FL 32653  
(352) 371-3604  
www.WorthingtonPeds.com

MATTHEW LEE PA-C  
TERESA BRUNEY, ARNP

## **Patient Education Handout --- Infant Reflux Positioning**

Gastroesophageal reflux (GER) is common in infants under 2 years of age. About half of all infants spit up many times a day in the first three months of life. Most healthy infants experience few to no symptoms and continue to thrive happily while producing multiple messes! Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a more serious and longer lasting form of GER with additional symptoms such as pain, coughing, arching of the back, and poor feeding.

If an infant appears healthy, has good growth, and seems to have typical spitting, treatment is not usually needed. Many studies have looked at the relationship between infant positioning after feeding and the frequency of GER episodes. The conclusion that elevating the head of the crib was not significantly helpful was a surprise. **However, side positioning continues to be the preferred method to help infants reflux less when put to sleep after a feed.** The positioning approach of placing infants on their right side is most effective for the first hour after a feed and then turning them to the left side thereafter can improve gastric emptying.

The particular benefit offered by this approach is a reduction in late reflux episodes, which are the most acidic. Please let us know if you have any questions about what appears to be the “happy spitter.”

Please call for an appointment if your infant vomits large amounts or has projectile or forceful vomiting, particularly if less than 2 months of age. Other symptoms of concern are crying excessively or refusing feedings frequently.

### **Evidence-Based References:**

Tobin, J., P. McCloud, and D. Cameron. “Posture and Gastroesophageal Reflux: A Case for Left Lateral Positioning.” *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 76.3 (1997): 254–258. Print.

Wijk MP, Bennings MA, Dent J.. “Body Positioning and GER in Neonates.” *J Pediatr*. 2007; 151: 585-590. Online

“Gastroesophageal Reflux (GER) and Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) in Infants.” *National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases*. Online. 2015.