

Being sick

It is fairly common for babies to be sick. Babies often vomit when they swallow air during feeding. This is completely normal and will usually stop after the first few months.



Making sure that your baby is in a good position when feeding and winding your baby properly afterwards will help to keep vomiting to a minimum.

However, persistent vomiting can sometimes be a sign of something more serious. The most common cause in both children and babies is gastroenteritis. This is an infection of the gut usually caused by a virus or bacteria and is unusual in breastfed babies. It also causes diarrhoea. Your child's immune system will usually fight off the infection after a few days.

Causes of vomiting in babies

- Swallowing lots of air during feeding (more common with bottle fed babies)
- Gastroenteritis (an infection of the gut)
- A food allergy or milk intolerance
- Gastro-oesophageal reflux, which is when stomach acid escapes back up the gullet
- Too big a hole in the bottle teat, causing your baby to drink too much milk
- Accidentally swallowing a drug or poison
- A birth condition where the passage from the stomach to the bowel has narrowed and food cannot pass through easily, causing projectile vomiting. This condition is called congenital pyloric stenosis
- A blockage, like a hernia, in your baby's bowel. They will vomit frequently and cry as if in great pain

If your baby is vomiting, carry on breastfeeding or bottle feeding as usual. If they seem dehydrated (see below), they will need extra fluids. Ask your pharmacist if they would recommend oral rehydration fluids for your baby. Oral rehydration fluid is a special powder that you make up into a drink, which contains sugar and salts in specific amounts to help replace the water and salts lost through vomiting and diarrhoea. Brands include Dioralyte, Electrolade and Rehidrat.

Severe vomiting and diarrhoea can easily lead to dehydration, especially in young babies. This means your child's body does not have enough water or the right balance of salts to carry out its normal functions.

Signs of dehydration

Children with dehydration often feel and look unwell. The signs of dehydration are:

- Crying without producing tears
- Dry mouth
- Passing urine (wee) less than usual, or not wetting many nappies
- Increased thirst
- Floppiness
- Lethargy



For more information, help and support go to www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk or visit NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk

Choose the right care

What to do next...



Choose care at home if...

- Your baby vomits small amounts shortly after feeding. This is normal and nothing to worry about
- Your baby has been vomiting larger amounts or more often, but has been vomiting like this for less than 24 hours



Choose your Pharmacist, or GP if...

- Your baby has a high temperature (fever) of 38°C (100.4°F) or above if they are less than three months old, or 39°C (102.2°F) or above if they are between three and six months old (call your GP or GP out-of-hours service)
- Your child has been vomiting for more than 24 hours
- Your child has not been able to hold down fluids for the last eight hours, or you think they are dehydrated
- They are floppy, irritable, off their food or generally not their usual self
- They have severe tummy pain
- They have a headache and stiff neck - call your GP immediately



Call 999 A&E if...

- Your child has a high temperature but their hands and feet feel cold
- Your child has a bulging fontanelle (the soft spot at the top of a baby's head)
- Your baby has a fit (seizure)
- Your baby turns blue, blotchy or very pale
- Your baby has a stiff neck
- Has breathing problems, like breathing fast or grunting while breathing, or they seem to be working harder than usual to breathe (for example, sucking in under the ribcage)
- Your baby has a spotty, purple-red rash anywhere on their body (this could be sign of meningitis, which is a serious infection)



For more information, help and support go to www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk or visit NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk

Choose the right care