

Reflux Survival Strategies

These tips are written by reflux parents for the benefit of reflux parents, based on their own experiences. They are of a general nature only, and are not meant to replace specific medical advice.



www.reflux.org.au

They may help you to overcome the enormous amount of stress created by caring for a baby with 'reflux', but if you have any concerns, please discuss these with your doctor or Child Health Nurse.

1. Don't expect that you have all the answers from the beginning- it is a really steep learning curve, and chances are you did not know much about reflux before you had your child.
2. Children with reflux are not born with a manual, and there are generally no right or wrong answers on how to best handle this. They are all individual, and what works for one may not work for another. It really is a matter of trial and error until you find something that works for you and your family.
3. Accept you are doing your best, and try not to be too hard on yourself. Remind yourself this is not your fault.
4. Try to focus on what you are doing right, not on what you feel is going wrong. You aren't doing anything wrong; you just may not have worked out the best answers yet.
5. Realize that your situation is tough, as children with reflux can have very high needs, and most people do not understand what you are going through or how to help – this may come out in unhelpful things they say, or by not offering support and help
6. Listen to everyone's advice; however, do what feels right and ensure the choices you make are safe for your child. Discuss any issues with your doctor.
7. Believe in yourself and trust your instincts. Reflux is a medical condition; it's NOT in your head!
8. Look after yourself- not only are YOU as important as your child, but who's there to look after them if you fall apart?
9. Many parents report that reflux can flare when anything stresses the child – hot sticky weather is a common trigger, along with over-tiredness (vicious cycle), change in routine, colds, infections, teething, vaccinations etc. Sometimes it can help to know that, so that any changes make more sense.
10. You can drive yourself crazy trying to figure out why today was better or worse than yesterday ("what did I do; what did I eat; maybe if I did this; maybe if I tried that?"). The simple fact is, reflux can be cyclic and some days may just be worse than others, for reasons you may never know.
11. Try to live in the present. Don't dwell on the past and try not to waste time worrying about what might happen in the future.
12. Try not to be a perfectionist or expect too much from yourself or family members (they may be as stressed and upset as you but may show it differently).
13. Talk it over. Don't bottle it up but ring a friend or a support group contact. Talking things over helps to relieve the strain and often helps you to see what you can do about the problem.
14. Think about how you might change a stressful situation. (e.g. take your child back to the doctor or get help in the home)
15. Take one thing at a time. Focus on caring for your child with reflux, your family, and yourself (not necessarily in that order). Take care of the urgent tasks and leave the rest to be done when you have time, or to be done by others (e.g. cleaner, friend).
16. Try to ignore comments about how lucky you are that the baby doesn't have a worse condition. You KNOW that you're lucky, but it doesn't help you cope with the screaming NOW.
17. Avoid blaming each other for the suffering you are going through. Everything always seems ten times worse when a child is screaming.
18. Take each day as it comes, and just maybe it helps to know that life really can get better, no matter how hard it is right now. Remember though, if you aren't coping, please ask for help, and seek medical guidance.
19. Recognise that there will be times you feel more able to cope, and more positive, while other times you may feel quite low and overwhelmed. This is normal.
20. It may help to accept life as it is so there is some degree of peace of mind; rather than fighting against it and expecting a cure in those children whose reflux continues to be an issue. It may not be fair, but that is the reality.