

How to Burp Your Baby: A Parent's Guide to Reducing Wind and Discomfort



Highlights

Babies can swallow air while crying or feeding.

Burping helps release air from the baby's upper digestive system.

Burping can be done during and after feeds.

Babies may experience wind and may need burping during feeds.

It's normal for babies to bring up small amounts of milk when burping.

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Understanding Burping

Burping is a normal way for the body to release air from the upper digestive system. Another term for burping is belching or "bringing up wind." It occurs

when babies swallow air during feeding or crying.

Most of the air that comes out during burping originates in the oesophagus before reaching the stomach. If air isn't released, it travels through the digestive system and is passed out as wind from the baby's bottom. Gas is also produced as the baby's gut breaks down milk.

When Should I Burp My Baby?

There are no strict rules for burping. Some babies will naturally burp on their own, even during feeds. It doesn't matter if a baby is breastfed or bottle-fed-taking a pause to burp can be beneficial.

Many parents try burping their baby:

When sucking slows down during feeds
When the baby starts fussing or stops sucking
Between sides during breastfeeding
Halfway through or at the end of a feed

How to Burp Your Baby

After some trial and error, you'll discover which burping position works best for you and your baby. Most babies burp more easily when held upright, but they don't have to be.

It's normal for babies to bring up small amounts of milk when burping. Always have a cloth handy to wipe up any spills.

Here are some common burping positions:

Hold your baby up over your shoulder and gently pat or rub their back.
Sit your baby on your lap, leaning them slightly forward with their tummy against your hand. Pat or rub their back.
Place your baby face down on your lap or forearm, rubbing their back gently.

Causes of Wind in Babies

Babies can get wind when they swallow air while feeding or crying. Some babies may feed quickly and swallow excess air. If breastfeeding, a rapid let-down of milk can make it harder for babies to suck and swallow properly, causing them to swallow more air.

For bottle-fed babies:

Use a slower-flow teat to reduce air intake.

Hold your baby at a slight incline to allow air bubbles to rise.

Take frequent breaks during feeds to give the baby a chance to burp.

Handling Excessive Wind in Babies

While you can't control how much air your baby swallows, you can try soothing methods if your baby seems uncomfortable:

A warm bath

Gentle tummy massage

If your baby seems excessively unsettled, try calming techniques and make sure they are not in discomfort from wind or gas buildup.

When to See a Doctor

Trust your instincts as a parent. If you're worried, consult a doctor, especially if your baby:

Vomits large amounts of milk or food

Vomits forcefully or projects milk after feeding

Has a fever or appears unwell

Refuses to feed or consumes less than usual

Continues to cry for long periods despite your efforts

If you're finding it hard to manage your baby's crying or if it's impacting your emotional well-being, it's okay to seek help from a healthcare professional.

Tools and Assistance

For personalized advice, consult a pediatrician or healthcare professional.
Use baby burping guides and tools, like burping pillows, for additional support.
Consider seeking guidance on bottle-feeding techniques if wind problems persist.