

Parent Information

How to stop reflux medications

What are Acid Suppression Therapy (AST) Medications?

Some babies with reflux (or gastro-oesophageal reflux) are given medications called Acid Suppression Therapies (ASTs) to reduce stomach acid. These medications have been shown to have no benefit for babies with reflux. There are two types of AST medications:

- Proton Pump Inhibitors (such as Losec or Nexium)
- H2 Receptor Antagonists (such as Zantac)

These medications help only if your baby has 'gastro-oesophageal reflux disease' (GORD). This means they vomit a lot AND have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Choking, coughing or wheezing during feeds
- Vomiting up blood
- Distress during feeds or refusal to feed
- Poor weight gain or weight loss.

As with any medication there are potential risks and side effects. You should discuss these with your doctor or nurse.

Taking these medications means that babies may be:

- 3 to 6 times more likely to develop gastroenteritis (gastro) and pneumonia
- 4 times more likely to not get enough nutrients from their food
- almost 2 times more likely to have a bone fracture later on in life
- 2 times more likely to get an infection that causes severe diarrhoea (known as *Clostridium difficile* infection)

Is it safe to stop the medication?

If your baby is currently on one of these medications for reflux but your baby is physically healthy and growing well, then you can try to stop the medication.

The best way to stop these medications is to do it gradually. This gives your baby's stomach time to re-adjust. Here is a way you can do this:

Timeline	Dose change
Weeks 1-2	Give half dose per day
Weeks 2-3	Give half dose every 2 nd day
Week 4	Stop medication altogether

If you have any questions or concerns, talk to your doctor.