



“MAKE IT GO AWAY!”

Tips for Easing and Preventing a Child’s Stomachache

There’s no getting around it: kids can get stomachaches as a result of acid indigestion. Whether it’s from racing to play dates and soccer practice, eating on the run, trying new foods or worrying about homework and tests, children face a variety of things that could cause stomach upset. But parents are in luck. There are many ways to ease these types of stomachaches or to prevent them altogether.

Laura A. Jana, M.D., a pediatrician and author of the new book *Food Fights: Winning the Nutritional Challenges of Parenthood Armed with Insight, Humor and a Bottle of Ketchup*, just released by the American Academy of Pediatrics, offers quick and easy tips about managing these types of children’s stomachaches.

Preventing Upset Stomachs

Avoid eating large meals

- A simple way to help prevent a child’s upset stomach is by not letting him eat too much in the first place. Parents can’t realistically monitor everything that their child eats, but they can use common sense to control the amount that’s served to the child. Family meals and packed lunches, for instance, can be served in controlled portions, and remember, no kid should be forced to join the “Clean Plate Club.”

Eat smaller, more frequent meals

- Eating smaller meals can help keep a child’s body fueled throughout the entire day. Eating smaller portions can also reduce the pressure on the lower esophageal sphincter and may help prevent acid from leaving the stomach.

Avoid lying down or physical exertion soon after meals

- Children are usually on the go, but some may need to shift into low gear after meals. After eating, the body starts the digestion process and the stomach fills with highly acidic gastric juices that break down foods. If a child lies down or engages in physical activity after eating, the stomach acid could actually make its way into the esophagus, resulting in a stomachache or gastric reflux.

Manage a child’s stress level

- Don’t discount the effect that stress can have on a child’s stomach. Although not all stressors can be eliminated, parents can help teach children coping skills to keep themselves – and their tummies – calm.

It’s also important for parents to teach children about good nutrition and provide them with healthy food choices. The better the nutrition, the more likely the child will be able to handle the stress.



Easing Upset Stomachs

Raise the head of a child's bed to tackle heartburn

- If a child is experiencing stomach problems or heartburn when sleeping, it's a good idea to elevate the head of his bed. Gravity can help the stomach acids to stay in the child's stomach, preventing acid reflux. If elevating the bed needs to be done most nights, parents should discuss this with a doctor because this could be a sign of a more serious issue like GERD.

Feed a child "stomach friendly" foods

- Parents should present children with a variety of foods but if they are experiencing stomachaches as the result of acid indigestion, it's a wise idea to avoid the common triggers for acid indigestion including fatty or fried foods, chocolate, garlic, onion, tomatoes and caffeine.

Give a child a safe remedy

- There are several over-the-counter remedies for easing a child's upset stomach. The fact that new TUMS® Kids™ is designed to both quickly neutralize the acid that may cause a child's upset stomach and serve as an excellent source of calcium means that it can help kids feel better safely and quickly and is also good for them. Its Cherry Blast flavor and smooth texture also play an important role in making it easier for kids to take.

Serve up flat ginger ale

- Pure ginger, in the form of candied root, is known for easing stomach pains, which means that other foods and drinks with ginger can also work, including ginger soda, ginger snaps and ginger candy. Ginger ale is preferred because it's easily digestible for kids.

Focus on fluids

- When a child has a stomachache and doesn't feel like eating, it's a good idea to try and make sure that he drinks enough fluids to stay hydrated. Fluids are not only good for a child's overall well-being but can also help alleviate problems that can be the cause of some stomachaches such as constipation.