

# Pointers For Parents

## When It Comes To Kids' Tummy Troubles, Parents Should Trust Their Gut Instincts

(NAPSA)—Doctors, friends and relatives told Caroline McGraw that her daughter Lauren would outgrow her digestive problems... frequent vomiting, difficulty swallowing, refusing to eat. Despite assurances the problems would go away with time, they did not. Caroline trusted her gut instinct that something was wrong and that Lauren's problems were not the result of being a fussy or finicky eater. Thanks to Caroline's persistence, Lauren was finally diagnosed as suffering from a serious, but treatable condition, called gastroesophageal reflux disease or GERD.

Dr. Bill Sears, renowned parenting expert and author of 30 childcare books, has treated numerous GERD patients and counseled many concerned parents. "Because children with GERD have such a diverse range of symptoms, it can be challenging for parents to recognize," says Dr. Bill. "I often refer to kids with GERD as 'hurting children' because it can be hard for them to communicate what is causing their discomfort. It is important for parents and healthcare professionals to be on the lookout for symptoms of pediatric GERD so that we can treat the condition and ease the child's pain and discomfort."

GERD is one of the most common gastrointestinal disorders in children. It can occur when stomach contents, such as food and

### Tips from Dr. Bill Sears for children with GERD

- Position your child to sleep on the left side
- Elevate the head of your child's bed (gravity helps minimize reflux)
- Cut out caffeine, carbonated beverages and citrus/tomato products from his or her diet
- Don't expose your child to secondhand cigarette smoke
- Avoid dressing your child in tight clothing (clothes with tight waistbands)
- Help your child maintain a healthy weight
- See your healthcare professional to discuss treatment options



stomach acid, frequently flow back into the esophagus. The stomach acids irritate the sensitive lining of the esophagus and cause symptoms such as a painful, burning feeling in the throat and chest. Common symptoms of GERD in children may include heartburn (chest pain), frequent regurgitation or vomiting, irritability with meals, abdominal pain (stomachache) and difficulty swallowing.

To raise awareness of this problem, Dr. Bill is teaming up with the Pediatric/Adolescent Gastroesophageal Reflux Association

(PAGER), a patient group made up of parents with children who suffer from GERD, to launch an educational campaign called "Gut Instincts: When You *Know* Something Is Wrong With Your Child." The goal of this campaign is to help parents and caregivers identify the symptoms of pediatric GERD and inform them about possible treatment options.

Parents and caregivers can help little GERD sufferers decrease symptoms by making some changes in daily activities such as avoiding dressing a child in tight clothing, cutting caffeine and spicy foods that trigger symptoms from his or her diet and eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke. However, for some children this just isn't enough.

"There are a variety of treatments that can offer children relief from the uncomfortable and disruptive symptoms of GERD," says Dr. Sears. "If you suspect your child is suffering from GERD, talk to your healthcare professional about the treatment option that may be right for your child."

"Gut Instincts" is sponsored by an educational grant from TAP Pharmaceutical Products Inc. For free educational information on pediatric GERD, parents and caregivers can call 1-866-KID-GERD or log on to [www.gut-instincts.com](http://www.gut-instincts.com), a site that offers information about GERD in children and treatment options.