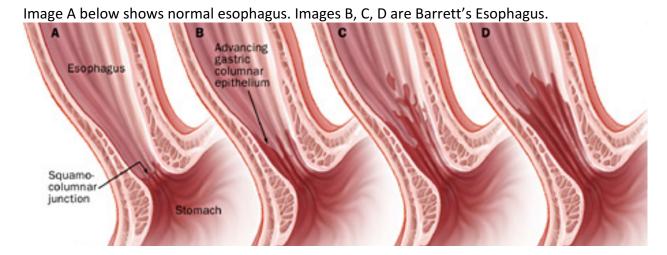
Barrett's esophagus in infants/children

What is it? Barrett's esophagus is the precursor to cancer of the esophagus (adenocarcinoma of the esophagus).

Barrett's esophagus occurs in the esophagus (near the stomach) due to long-term exposure to stomach acid. The normal esophagus cells are replaced with gastric columnar epithelium (see image below). This thought to happen when the esophagus is damaged (for example by esophagitis or erosions) and then heals in the presence of acid refluxate (which may contain acid and perhaps bile). It is primarily diagnosed in adults, because that is the group of patients in which physicians look. It was not imagined that Barrett's esophagus would occur in children or infants. Of course, it was not imagined that acid reflux (also called GER, Gastroesophageal Reflux) occurred in infants or children to any significant degree. Now we have reasonable data to suggest that GER occurs in 100% of 3 month old infants, 40% of 6 month old infants and 20% of 1 year olds (1-4). In 1.5 year olds, reflux occurs in 7 to 20% of children (5,6). [GER is not the same thing as GERD, reflux without significant symptoms is called GER. GER with symptoms is called GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease)].

There are limited data on Barrett's esophagus in children (as mentioned above because few physicians are looking). However, there is evidence that Barrett's is increasing in the pediatric population. (7)

<u>What should you do?</u> 1. Do not worry about Barrett's esophagus. It is not common in children and rare in infants. 2. If your infant/child has reflux, then control the acid reflux as most children will outgrow reflux by 2 years old (and many by 12 months).



http://www.infant-acid-reflux-solutions.com

CITATIONS

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