

YOUR GUIDE TO Teething

Teething can be a frustrating time for babies and their parents. Knowing what to expect can help to make it a little less painful.

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Did you know that before birth, that the tooth buds of all your baby's first teeth can be spotted around the eighth week after conception? When they are born, the first set of teeth is already under the gums! It's recommended to begin an oral health routine with your baby before the first tooth appears and clean your baby's gums using a clean damp cloth or piece of gauze, after feeding.

Babies usually start teething around the 6 months mark. This can vary though, but most babies will have their first tooth between 6 and 12 months. Teething is the process of new teeth working their way through the gums and is a perfectly normal part of a child's growth and development. It is not something that parents need to worry about.

Teething will not cause your child to be sick, so if your child has a fever, diarrhoea, is vomiting, or has a nappy rash don't put it down to 'ah they are just teething'. It is most likely caused by something else as children pick up lots of bugs at this age. You should bring your child to your doctor if you are worried.

There are different stages of tooth development and babies' teeth usually emerge in the following order: Lower incisors (bottom front teeth) are usually the first to come through at around 6 months. This is followed by the upper incisors (top front teeth) which tend to come through at about 7-8 months.

All 20 baby teeth are normally in the mouth between 2 and 2.5 years of age.

While all of these will eventually fall out, they are essential for eating, appearance, and speech. They also hold the space for adult teeth to come, which develop underneath them, and guide the new teeth into their correct positions.

The primary molars, usually the last teeth to fall out normally remain in the mouth up to about 12 years of age.

Nobody likes to see their child upset but some children do have teething problems. Symptoms may be red, swollen tender gums, red cheeks, dribbling excess drool (most common side effect), face rash (from drooling - teething may cause a mild rash on a baby's chin or neck, but it does not cause a widespread rash) or disturbed sleep. It's important to remember that teething may not always be to blame for these symptoms.

Your baby may also want to chew everything in sight, including their fingers and toys!

Tips for helping your teething baby

Every baby is different, and you may have to try out various things until you find something that works for your baby to make it more comfortable. To relieve teething discomfort like feeding, irritability, and tender gums certain teething rings (or a small spoon) that

may help can be cooled in the fridge. Do not put these in the freezer, as it could damage your baby's gums.

Massaging or gently rubbing gums with a clean finger or cool damp cloth may also help.

Never tie a teething ring around your baby's neck or use amber teething jewellery which are often sold as baby teething aids. These products are very unsafe and a choke hazard.

If your baby is 6 months or older, chewing on something healthy like a bread stick or vegetable stick may also help, but don't leave your child alone to avoid any risk of choking. Avoid any foods that contain sugar for e.g., rusks, as this can cause tooth decay, even if your baby only has a couple of teeth. Milk or cooled boiled water may also help.

If you use a soother, make sure it is an orthodontic one and we advise against dipping it in honey, jam, or anything sweet. Wean the baby off it as soon as possible as it can affect the way a baby's teeth grow.

Comforting or playing with your baby may help to distract them from any pain in their gums.

If teething is making your baby drool or dribble more than usual, gently wiping their face may help prevent a rash.

Teething gels and pain relief

General oral pain relief gels are not suitable for children. Sugar-free teething gels are available over the counter from the pharmacy - they contain a mild local anaesthetic that helps numb any pain. These are for babies older than 4 months. If you do decide to use a gel, make sure you use a teething gel that's specially designed for young children. Speak to your public health nurse, doctor, or pharmacist for further advice.

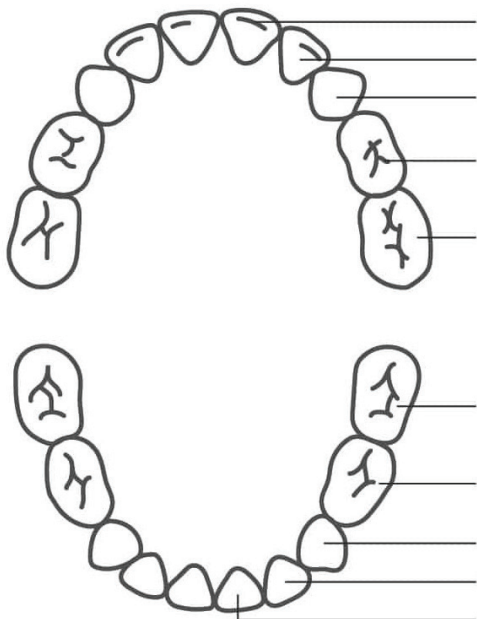
Some unlicensed homeopathic gels advertised on the internet have been linked to serious side effects and are not safe to use in young infants and babies.

Looking after baby's new teeth

After feeding and before bed, wipe gums with a clean damp cloth to remove bacteria and sugars. When the first tooth appears (around 6 months) clean with a soft brush and water twice daily. Avoid toothpaste, until the age of two, unless advised by your dentist. Visit your dentist by your baby's first birthday. Find a dentist near you by checking <http://www.dentist.ie/find-a-dentist.10.html>

From birth, taking care of your baby's gums and teeth will set them up with a healthy mouth for life. You can help your baby avoid tooth decay and gum disease with daily healthy habits. Check www.dentalhealth.ie for further information.

Primary Teeth



Upper teeth

Central incisor	8-12 months
Lateral incisor	9-13 months
Canine (cuspid)	16-22 months
First molar	13-19 months
Second molar	25-33 months

Erupt

Shed

6-7 years
7-8 years
10-12 years

Lower teeth

Second molar	25-31 months
First molar	14-18 months
Canine (cuspid)	17-23 months
Lateral incisor	10-16 months
Central incisor	6-10 months

Erupt

Shed

10-12 years
9-11 years
9-12 years
7-8 years
6-7 years