



# Teething

All babies teethe. For some babies it can be painful. Read on for information from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) about teething and how to help ease the pain.

## What Is Teething?

Teething is when the first set of teeth breaks through the gums. The first set of teeth may also be called baby or primary teeth. Teeth may come in (erupt) at different times.

## When Teeth Come In

Teething is different for each baby. A first tooth may come in between 3 months and 1 year of age. Many babies get their first tooth between 6 and 10 months of age.

The 2 front teeth (central incisors), either upper or lower, usually appear first, followed by the opposite front teeth. The first molars come in next, followed by the canines or eye teeth.

By the time children are 33 months (almost 3 years) of age, they may have all 20 baby teeth. Around 6 or 7 years of age, children begin to shed their baby teeth. The baby teeth are pushed out by new teeth coming in. By the teen years, the total number of permanent (adult) teeth is 32.

PRIMARY TEETH			Erupt	Shed
<b>Upper Teeth</b>				
Central incisor			8-12 mos.	6-7 yrs.
Lateral incisor			9-13 mos.	7-8 yrs.
Canine (cuspid)			16-22 mos.	10-12 yrs.
First molar			13-19 mos.	9-11 yrs.
Second molar			25-33 mos.	10-12 yrs.
<b>Lower Teeth</b>				
Second molar			23-31 mos.	10-12 yrs.
First molar			14-18 mos.	9-11 yrs.
Canine (cuspid)			17-23 mos.	9-12 yrs.
Lateral incisor			10-16 mos.	7-8 yrs.
Central incisor			6-10 mos.	6-7 yrs.

This is a chart showing the typical ages at which teeth erupt, or come through, the gums.

© American Dental Association. Used with permission.

## Signs and Symptoms of Teething

When babies are about 3 months old, they begin putting everything in their mouths. They also begin to drool more because they begin to make more saliva. A baby who is drooling and chewing on things may also be teething. Babies may chew on their fingers and toys because it makes their gums feel good.

Besides drooling and chewing on things, here are other signs and symptoms of teething.

- Gums are swollen or tender in some places.
- Pain and discomfort—babies may be more irritable or cry.

**NOTE:** Occasionally, your baby's body temperature may rise slightly, but teething does not cause a fever. If your baby's temperature rises above 100.4°F (38.0°C), teething is not the cause. If your baby has a fever and other symptoms of illness, such as vomiting or diarrhea, call your baby's doctor.

## How to Ease Teething Pain

Many babies do not appear to be in pain when teething, although some may become irritable. Teething pain can even wake a baby at night. If your baby appears to be in pain, here are ways you may be able to help ease the pain.

- Gently rub your baby's gums with clean fingers or a wet cloth.
- Give your baby a solid (not liquid-filled) teething ring.
- Offer your baby a cold, damp washcloth to chew on.
- Give your baby a pain reliever, such as acetaminophen (one brand name is Tylenol) or ibuprofen (2 brand names are Advil and Motrin). Always look carefully at the label on the medicine and follow the directions. Each type of medicine has different directions based on the age and weight of your baby. Ask your baby's doctor about the right dose for your baby.

## Unsafe and Unhelpful Products

Some products that are sold for teething pain relief are unsafe or unhelpful.

### Gels

Gels that you can rub on a baby's gums that contain benzocaine or lidocaine should not be used. These medicines are not safe. Benzocaine can cause a condition that lowers the amount of oxygen in the blood. A lack of oxygen can cause serious light-headedness, confusion, shortness of breath, and a rapid heartbeat. Lidocaine is off-limits for children because it can be toxic, may cause choking, and can lead to heart and nerve problems.

Even if a gel does not contain these 2 medicines, babies who are teething drool so much that gels do not stay in place long enough to be helpful.

### Homeopathic Remedies

Some homeopathic remedies, including teething tablets and gels, contain belladonna, a plant-based poison. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) tested some of these products and found levels of belladonna that can be dangerous to babies.

### Amber Necklaces

Amber necklaces claim to help babies with teething pain. However, there is no evidence that amber necklaces can relieve pain. Also, babies should not wear necklaces because they are a choking risk. Necklaces

can get caught on objects and strangle a baby. The AAP advises against babies or young children wearing jewelry because of the risk of choking or strangulation.

If you choose to try an amber necklace for your baby's teething pain, be sure you

- Always supervise a baby wearing a necklace.
- Have your baby wear the necklace on an ankle or a wrist instead of around the neck.
- Remove the necklace or bracelet when you leave the room, even for a short time.
- Remove the necklace or bracelet when your baby is sleeping (even for a nap).

### Teething Biscuits

Teething biscuits can be a choking hazard because chunks can break off easily. Also, these biscuits are not very nutritious; most contain sugar and salt. If you choose to give your baby a teething biscuit, watch your baby closely while he or she is eating it.

### How to Care for Your Baby's Teeth

Once a tooth appears you should brush the tooth twice a day with a small, soft toothbrush and a smear of fluoride toothpaste the size of a grain of rice, especially after the last drink or meal of the day. Also, do not put your baby to bed with a bottle because this leads to tooth decay.

### Dental Checkups

Regular dental checkups, getting enough fluoride, brushing and flossing, and eating right are all important for healthy teeth.

- The AAP recommends that all infants receive oral health risk assessments by 6 months of age. Infants at higher risk of early dental caries should be referred to a dentist as early as 6 months of age and no later than 6 months after the first tooth erupts or 12 months of age (whichever comes first) to establish their dental home.
- Every child should have a dental home established by 12 months of age.

### From Your Doctor



American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



healthychildren.org

Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents.  
and the American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

The persons whose photographs are depicted in this publication are professional models. They have no relation to the issues discussed. Any characters they are portraying are fictional. Products are mentioned for informational purposes only and do not imply an endorsement by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

© 2018 American Academy of Pediatrics. All rights reserved.