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# Teething Tots

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Medically reviewed by: [Larissa Hirsch, MD](#)

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## What Is Teething?

Teething is when teeth first come through a baby's gums. It can be a frustrating time for babies and their parents. Knowing what to expect during teething and how to make it a little less painful can help.

## When Does Teething Start?

While teething can begin as early as 3 months, most likely you'll see the first tooth start pushing through your baby's gum line when your little one is between 4 and 7 months old.

The first teeth to appear usually are the two bottom front teeth, also known as the central incisors. They're usually followed 4 to 8 weeks later by the four front upper teeth (central and lateral incisors). About a month later, the lower lateral incisors (the two teeth flanking the bottom front teeth) will appear.

Next to break through are the first molars (the back teeth used for grinding food), then finally the eyeteeth (the pointy teeth in the upper jaw). Most kids have all 20 of their primary teeth by their third birthday. (If your child's teeth come in much slower than this, speak to your doctor.)

In some rare cases, kids are born with one or two teeth or have a tooth emerge within the first few weeks of life. Unless the teeth interfere with feeding or are loose enough to pose a choking risk, this is usually not a cause for concern.

## What Are the Signs of Teething?

As kids begin teething, they might drool more and want to chew on things. For some babies, teething is painless. Others may have brief periods of irritability, while some may seem cranky for weeks, with crying spells and disrupted sleeping and eating patterns. Teething can be uncomfortable, but if your baby seems very fussy, talk to your doctor.

Although tender and swollen gums could cause your baby's temperature to be a little higher than normal, teething doesn't usually cause high fever or diarrhea. If your baby does develop a fever during the teething phase, something else is probably causing the fever and you should contact your doctor.

## How Can I Make Teething Easier?

Here are some tips to keep in mind when your baby is teething:

- Gently wipe your baby's face often with a cloth to remove the drool and prevent rashes from developing.

- Rub your baby's gums with a clean finger.
- Give your baby something to chew on. Make sure it's big enough that it can't be swallowed or choked on and that it can't break into small pieces. A wet washcloth placed in the freezer for 30 minutes makes a handy teething aid. Be sure to take it out of the freezer before it becomes rock hard — you don't want to bruise those already swollen gums — and be sure to wash it after each use.

Rubber teething rings are also good, but avoid ones with liquid inside because they may break or leak. If you use a teething ring, chill it in the refrigerator, but NOT the freezer. Also, never boil to sterilize it — extreme changes in temperature could cause the plastic to get damaged and leak chemicals.

- Teething biscuits and frozen or cold food are only OK for kids who already eat solid foods. Don't use them if your child has not yet started solids. And make sure to watch your baby to make sure that no pieces break off or pose a choking hazard.
- If your baby seems irritable, ask your doctor if it is OK to give a dose of acetaminophen or ibuprofen (for babies older than 6 months) to ease discomfort.
- Never place an aspirin against the tooth, and don't rub alcohol on your baby's gums.
- Never tie a teething ring around a baby's neck or any other body part — it could get caught on something and strangle the baby.

- Don't use teething necklaces made of amber. These can lead to strangulation or choking if pieces break off.
- Don't use teething gels and tablets because they may not be safe for babies.

## How Should I Care for My Baby's Teeth?

The care and cleaning of your baby's teeth is important for long-term dental health. Even though the first set of teeth will fall out, tooth decay makes them fall out more quickly, leaving gaps before the permanent teeth are ready to come in. The remaining primary teeth may then crowd together to attempt to fill in the gaps, which may cause the permanent teeth to come in crooked and out of place.

Daily **dental care** should begin even before your baby's first tooth comes in. Wipe your baby's gums daily with a clean, damp washcloth or gauze, or brush them gently with a soft, infant-sized toothbrush and water (no toothpaste!).

As soon as the first tooth appears, brush it with water and fluoridated toothpaste, using only a tiny amount.

It's OK to use a little more toothpaste once a child is old enough to spit it out — usually around age 3. Choose one with fluoride and use only a pea-sized amount or less in younger kids. Don't let your child swallow the toothpaste or eat it out of the tube because an overdose of fluoride can be harmful to kids.

By the time all your baby's teeth are in, try to brush them at least twice a day and especially after meals. It's also important to get kids used

to flossing early on. A good time to start flossing is when two teeth start to touch. Talk to your dentist for advice on flossing those tiny teeth. You also can get toddlers interested in the routine by letting them watch and imitate you as you brush and floss.

Another important tip for preventing tooth decay: Don't let your baby fall asleep with a bottle. The milk or juice can pool in a baby's mouth and cause tooth decay and plaque.

The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends that kids see a dentist by age 1, or within 6 months after the first tooth appears, to spot any potential problems and advise parents about preventive care.

**Medically reviewed by: [Larissa Hirsch, MD](#)**

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# Teething Tots

Post Test – November 2024

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1. While teething can begin as early as 3 months, most likely you'll see the first tooth start pushing through your baby's gum line when your little one is between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ months old.
2. As kids begin teething, they might drool more and want to chew on things.  
True or False?
3. Although tender and swollen gums could cause your baby's temperature to be a little higher than normal, teething doesn't usually cause \_\_\_\_\_ or diarrhea.
4. Gently wipe your baby's face often with a cloth to remove the drool and prevent \_\_\_\_\_ from developing.
5. A wet \_\_\_\_\_ placed in the freezer for 30 minutes makes a handy teething aid.
6. Rubber teething rings are also good, but avoid ones with \_\_\_\_\_ inside because they may break or leak.
7. Place an aspirin against the tooth or rub alcohol on your baby's gum for teething pain.  
True or False?
8. Wipe your baby's gums daily with a clean, damp washcloth or gauze or brush them gently with a soft, \_\_\_\_\_ sized toothbrush and water (no toothpaste!).
9. Don't let your child swallow the toothpaste or eat it out of the tube because an overdose of \_\_\_\_\_ can be harmful to kids.
10. Don't let your baby fall asleep with a bottle. The milk or juice can pool in a baby's mouth and cause \_\_\_\_\_ and plaque.

October 2024 Quiz Answers. 1.Hygiene 2.Hour 3.True 4.School-age/Teens  
5.Sunlight 6.Caffeine 7.False 8.Heart Rate 9.Sleepiness 10.Melatonin



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