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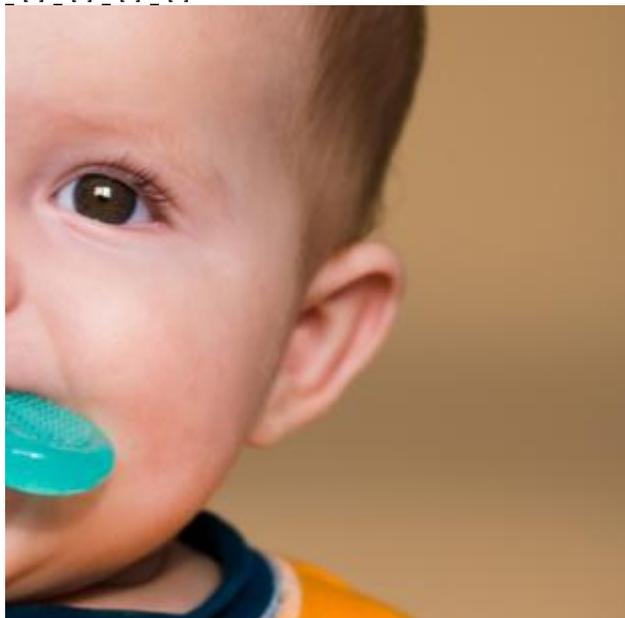


Baby teething symptoms

The age your baby gets teeth varies greatly from child to child. Although rare, your baby may even have a tooth or two at birth. For some babies teeth start to appear around four months, occasionally some babies won't have any until after the 12-month mark, but for most, baby teeth begin erupting anywhere from six to nine months of age.

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Baby teeth usually erupt in pairs, one appearing a few days after the other. There is a sequence that baby teeth are expected to appear in, but don't be surprised if teeth show up in any old order!

- The first teeth predicted to appear are the two lower middle incisors (the cutting teeth) followed by the two upper middle incisors;
- Next are the incisors on either side of these;
- The first back molars (the chewing teeth) are next to appear and may cause a little more pain and discomfort than earlier teeth;
- The four canines (the pointy teeth) come next;
- Followed by the other back molars, often referred to as 'two-year-old molars'.
- This makes a whole mouthful of up to 20 teeth by the time your baby is two – three years old.

Possible Signs of Teething

- Perhaps the first sign of a tooth emerging is when your baby is biting or gnawing a lot. They may chomp down on a finger when playing, or worse a nipple while having a breastfeed, Ouch!
- Your baby being a little clingier, grizzly, unsettled and generally miserable for a few days can also herald a new tooth;
- You may notice a clear nasal discharge and gums that are darker and puffier than usual;
- Your baby may experience ear infections or pain and tug on his ear lobes, while others may have a slight fever only as teeth poke through the gums.
- Smelly, poo-filled nappies are more common when teething, as is angry, red nappy rash;
- If your baby is eating solids they may go off them for a while, but there's no need to worry as the enjoyment of eating will soon return.

If your baby feeds well, sleeps well and happily plays during the day, teething is unlikely to be the cause behind a disturbed night's sleep. And while drooling is often attributed to teething, your baby does go through a developmental change at around three to four months of age where they'll begin to drool, put fingers in their mouth or even try to shove a whole fist in! While drooling moistens the mouth ready for teething, it's not necessarily a sign that baby teeth are imminent. Many times it's just a case of wait and see.

While some babies may show all or some of the above symptoms, some will teethe with no signs or troubles at all. "a whole mouthful of up to 20 teeth by the time your baby is two - three years old"

Teething Remedies

There are several natural and soothing remedies to bring comfort to your baby's teething pain. Here are some popular ideas to try:

- Help your baby feel more comfortable by giving them cold drinks and foods – you can use a feeding net if they're too young to handle solid foods, which will still allow them the experience of gumming the cool relief;
- Other things that are great for your baby to chew on are cold teething rings, clean wooden toys or a face washer that's been slightly dampened and then cooled in the freezer;
- Offer your baby extra cuddles and reassurance – mum and dad's love is a great soother;
- Try to gently massage your baby's gums with a clean finger and a little teething gel – be sure to follow the dosage and application instructions;
- There are several oils, powders and teething mixtures and beads available, but be sure to get professional instruction for how and where to use them;

Provide your baby with a healthy diet and a balanced and settled day. This will help reduce the poor behaviour that teething often gets the blame for. If your baby is having a particularly bad day and won't be comforted by any of these measures, try administering an anti-inflammatory or analgesic medication such as paracetamol, as advised and recommended by your health care professional.

Remember too, that all babies are different when it comes to what they need and when, so stay positive while you try to find a remedy that suits your baby.

Cleaning Baby Teeth

Baby teeth are eventually pushed out by adult teeth, so don't worry if your baby's teeth look a little misaligned. However adult teeth can come through decayed if first teeth are not looked after.

Cleaning baby teeth starts after the first couple of teeth have erupted. In the beginning, clean them with your finger and gauze, face washer or rubber finger cover. When your baby turns 12-15 months old, change to a small tooth brush and a low fluoride baby toothpaste. Baby toothpaste have less fluoride than adult toothpaste. You will need to assist with teeth cleaning in some way until your baby is big enough to be trusted to do it on their own, let's hope that's before they're a teenager!

Tooth decay is commonly caused by milk or juice settling around the teeth while your baby sleeps. At night there is less saliva produced to wash away sugar sediments, therefore when your baby has teeth it is important to clean their teeth before bed. Ask your dentist about fluoride recommendations in your area.

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