

# Teething

## When do babies start teething?

Some babies are born with their first teeth. Others start teething before they are 4 months old, and some after 12 months. But most babies start teething at around 6 months.

## When and how do babies' teeth emerge?

### Stage One:

- Bottom incisors (bottom central front teeth) - these are usually the first to erupt or come through at around 4 to 7 months
- Top incisors (top front central teeth) - these tend to come through at about 6 to 10 months
- Top lateral incisors (either side of the top front teeth) - these come through at around 9 to 12 months
- Lower lateral incisors (either side of the bottom front teeth) - these come through at around 10 to 16 months

There are now 8 incisors in total to help babies hold and cut their first solid food into smaller pieces.

### Stage Two:

- Upper back molars (wider teeth at the back of the mouth on the top) - these usually come through in pairs at around 12 to 19 months
- Lower molars (wider teeth at the back of the mouth at the bottom) - these usually come through also in pairs at around 13 to 20 months

There are now 8 larger molars to help grind the food during chewing.

### Stage Three:

- Upper canines (pointy, 'vampire' teeth between the incisors and molars on the top) - these usually come through at around 16 to 22 months
- Lower canines (pointy, 'vampire' teeth between the incisors and molars on the bottom) - these usually come through at around 17 to 23 months

The canines are the sharpest teeth in the mouth, used to rip and tear food into smaller pieces to then chew and swallow.

**There are now a full set of 20 milk or deciduous teeth in your baby's mouth!**

## Teething symptoms?

Baby teeth sometimes emerge with no pain or discomfort at all. At other times, you may notice:

- Your baby's gum is sore and red where the tooth is coming through

- One cheek is flushed
- They have a rash on their face
- They are rubbing their ear
- Your baby is dribbling more than usual
- They are gnawing and chewing on things a lot
- They are more fretful than usual
- They are sleeping less than usual
- They have a mild temperature of less than 38 degrees centigrade
- Some people think that teething causes other symptoms, such as diarrhoea and fever, but there's no evidence to support this. However, being in constant pain can lower immunities and possibly make your baby more susceptible to colds and other germs.

### What can I do help relieve my baby's teething symptoms?



There are a variety of teething rings on the market. Some rings can be chilled in the fridge - always read the instructions to find out if and how long they should be chilled. Never put a teething ring in the freezer as it could damage your baby's gums if frozen.



Some people have found that amber bead necklaces or bracelets can help relieve sore gums, but others have not seen a difference when using them.



Teething rings give your baby something to chew safely. This may ease their discomfort and distract them from any pain.



Soft chewing toys can also help give your baby some relief.



If your baby is 6 months or older, you can give them healthy things to chew on, such as raw fruit and vegetables; pieces of apple or carrot are ideal. You could also try giving your baby a crust of bread or a breadstick. Always stay close when your baby is eating in case they choke on larger pieces.

Teething gels and using Ibuprofen and Paracetamol can also help relieve discomfort. See the packaging of the products for how to use safely and always check with your Health Visitor or GP too.

### **When can I start brushing baby's teeth?**

You can start brushing your baby's teeth as soon as the first tooth emerges. Use a tiny smear of fluoride toothpaste on a baby toothbrush. Don't worry if it is tricky at first, as the important thing is to get your baby used to brushing their teeth as part of their daily routine. It sets a good example if your baby watches you and other family members brush your teeth.