



Teething

Teething occurs when teeth begin to break through the gums of a baby or child. This often starts when a baby is 6 to 8 months old, but can begin as early as 3 months.

Signs of teething

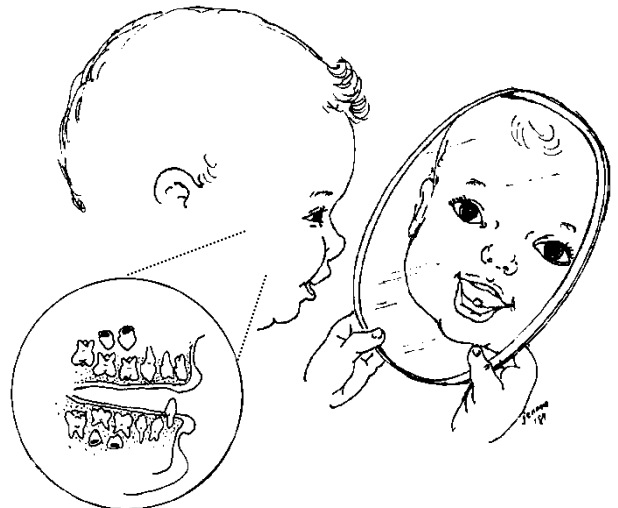
- drooling
- swollen or sore gums
- trouble sleeping
- biting objects
- not eating

Teething can be painful for some children. For others it is not. Discomfort comes from pressure of the tooth on the skin of the gums.

Your child's care

Here are some ways to comfort your baby and ease his or her pain:

- Gently rub the gums with a cool, damp washcloth.
- Give your baby something safe to chew on, such as firm rubber teething rings. Avoid teething rings with fluid inside or any plastic objects that might break.
- Do not let your baby use a teething necklace. It could strangle your child.
- Cold, soft foods such as yogurt or bananas may make the baby's gums feel better.
- Rub your baby's gums with a clean finger.
- Children's acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®) may help. Read the label to know the right dose for the age of your child or check with your child's doctor first. **Do not give ibuprofen to children younger than 6 months.**



Picture 1 Baby's first tooth usually appears by about 6 months of age.

- Do not use teething gels. They are no longer recommended.
- Wipe your baby's face often and keep it dry to prevent rashes.

Keep your baby's mouth and gums clean even if your baby does not have teeth. Here are some ways to care for your child's gums and teeth:

- After each meal, wipe your baby's gums with a washcloth.
- Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle of milk or juice. This can cause tooth decay.
- Use a soft bristle toothbrush to clean gums and new teeth.
- Clean your child's gums and teeth at least two times each day.
- Take your baby to a dentist before his or her first birthday.

Talk to your child's doctor before you start using toothpaste on your child's teeth. Children should not swallow toothpaste. Too much fluoride can be harmful.

Call your child's doctor if your child:

- Has a fever or other illness. Teething does not cause an illness.
- Loses a tooth due to an injury

Talk to your child's doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.