

# Toddlers Teething

**Baby's teeth start growing around six weeks after conception, and all twenty primary teeth are in place in the jawbone by the time of birth. Approximately 1 in 100 babies are born with natal teeth, but many of these are lost in the first few weeks of life.**

## The first teeth

As a general rule, babies will have their first teeth come through at around six months, in line with the need to move onto solid foods. First teeth can sometimes happen earlier though, and may even appear as late as 12 months of age in some babies.

The bottom two teeth (central incisors) usually appear first, followed by the upper two, and often come through in pairs. The molars begin to show at around 12 months of age and may cause a bit of discomfort. Babies will spend most of their second year teething.

All twenty of the primary teeth should be through by the time your child is three. The first permanent teeth start to come in at around six years of age.

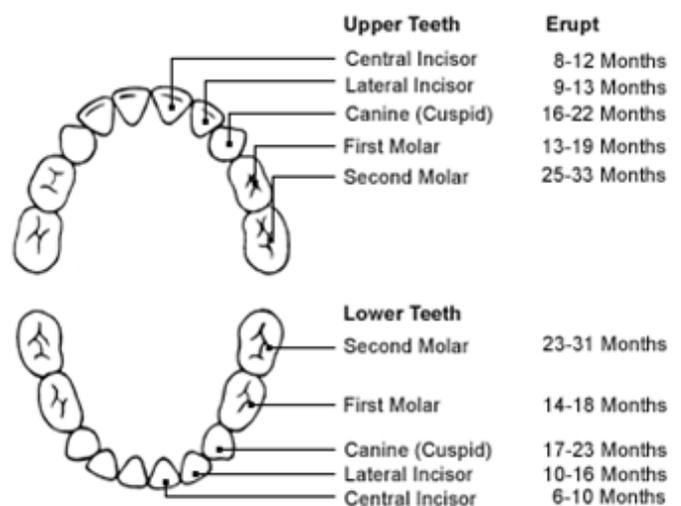
Many babies show no adverse signs of being unwell when teething. Teething is a natural part of a baby's life, and research suggests that teething is not responsible for many aspects of ill-health which were traditionally thought to relate to teething.

It is now generally accepted that teething does not cause diarrhoea, vomiting or even fevers. Although some of these symptoms appear around the time of teething, they are believed to be part of the overall developmental process. If you are concerned about any of your baby's symptoms however, see your early childhood nurse or your doctor.

Signs that your baby has teeth coming through include: redness at the site of the new tooth, and sometimes a flushed cheek. Some babies who are teething may dribble so much that they will need a bib to avoid getting their clothes saturated!

Occasionally babies will be more clingy than usual. The most obvious sign is an increase in the chewing of certain toys and other objects.

Some babies will respond well to teething aids (such as teething rings), rusks and even dummies while their first teeth are coming through.



The diagram illustrates the approximate times that the primary teeth come through in babies and young children.

## Keeping teeth healthy

If your baby is at the stage of finger foods, she may enjoy cool foods such as cucumber while teething, or more textured foods which require chewing. Avoid leaving your baby unattended with finger foods due to the risk of choking.

Sometimes as new teeth come through, babies may experience small blisters in their mouths called 'eruption cysts'. These blisters are normal and do not usually require treatment, although you may need to see a dentist if blisters persist.

As soon as the first teeth appear, it is important to establish a tooth-brushing routine with your baby to guard against tooth decay. There are now three-stage baby tooth brushes available which come with different attachments and allow your baby to get gently accustomed to the process of brushing her teeth. The first 'toothbrush' is ideal for teething (and can be purchased from your local supermarket or pharmacy).

Toothpaste is not advised until children are between 18 months and 2 years. Use low fluoride toothpaste to begin with, and encourage your child to spit the paste out, and avoid swallowing.

## Oral Thrush

Oral thrush is a yeast infection which commonly occurs in babies under 12 months. It is caused by yeast called *Candida albicans* which is present in everybody's mouths and stomachs, and on the skin and genital areas. If the immune system becomes weakened and the balance is upset, there is an over growth of the candida yeast, resulting in the condition of thrush.

Newborns often develop oral thrush within the first few weeks of life, and babies under one year may get it in conjunction with nappy rash around their genital area.

Common signs and symptoms of oral thrush include: white, creamy spots in the mouth and a foamy, coated tongue; sometimes pale pink spots appear on the lips, and there is a sore or burning sensation in the mouth (which may often affect your infant's willingness to feed).

Conventional treatments may include: oral anti-fungal medications, in the form of drops or gel, which may be spread around the inside of the mouth. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

Oral thrush can cause the mouth to be extra sensitive, so avoid hot or acidic foods and keep all fluids and foods cool and bland. If your baby is able, drinking through a straw may feel better and hurt their mouth less.

It is also a good idea to minimise foods or drinks containing sugar (even natural sugars, like fructose) as yeast thrives on sugar, making the infection harder to beat.

Natural treatments may include: the use of vitamin C to boost immune function, or grapefruit seed extract - for its natural anti-fungal properties. You may also choose to give your baby one teaspoon of liquid acidophilus (which promotes the re-establishment of healthy bacteria, and digestive balance) twice a day. Check with your pharmacist for specific instructions and dosages.

If you find that your baby's nappy rash does not respond to the usual creams and treatments, or if it becomes severe, this may indicate the presence of thrush and should be checked by a doctor or your early childhood nurse.

Babies with thrush do not need to be excluded from child care, unless they seem too uncomfortable or distressed with the condition.

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**Your toddler's first oral health assessment can be provided by a Dentist or other Oral Health Professional, Maternal and Child Health Nurse or Doctor.**

**Having regular check-ups can help to spot problems early. And remember, early stages of tooth decay can be treated**

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### Want more information?

**Raising Children Network**

For information on raising children  
[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

**Parents website**

[www.parents.com](http://www.parents.com)

**Nutrition Australia**

<http://nutritionaustralia.org/national/resource/infant-nutrition>

**Department of Health**

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/gug-director-toc~gug-solids>

**Youth Healthline**

Phone 1300 131 719

**Parent Helpline**

Phone 1300 1300 52  
9am - 9pm weekdays and  
4pm - 9pm weekends for advice on child health and parenting

**For parenting and child health information**

[www.resiliency.com](http://www.resiliency.com)

[www.reslnet.uiuc.edu](http://www.reslnet.uiuc.edu)

### Local Services

**Community Health Dental Clinic**

Provides free dental care to all children/and young people up to 18 years of age, as well as adults who are eligible Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession cardholders

37 Oliver Avenue Goonellabah

Phone 1300 651 625

**Lismore Community Health - Child and Family**

Phone 02 6620 7687

8am – 5:00pm, Monday to Friday to make an appointment.