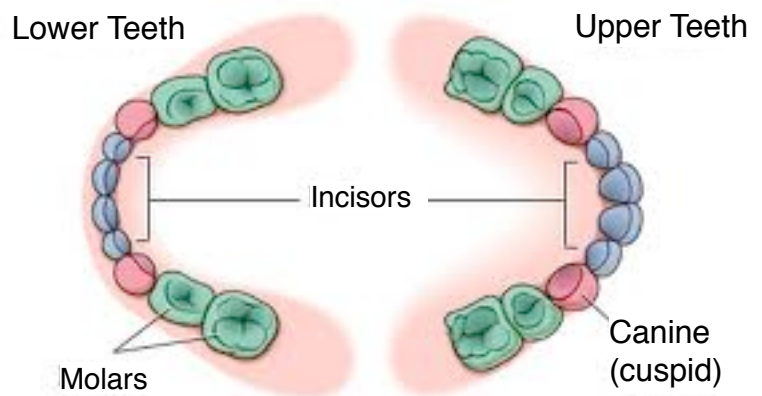


Teething

Teething is a normal behavior associated with tooth eruptions that usually starts between 4 and 7 months, although tooth eruptions may continue for 2 years. Because it occurs over such a broad time span, teething has been blamed for an astonishing variety of symptoms in pre-verbal children, including fevers, pain, diarrhea, and rashes. While teething does often cause mild symptoms and discomfort, parents need to be careful not to blame everything a child does during this time on teething and potentially miss important symptoms of illness.

The timing of tooth eruptions vary widely. Some children get their first teeth as early as 4 months, while others may not have their first tooth erupt until 15 months of age. This timing is usually a result of genetics and is nothing to worry about, although you should talk with us if your child does not have any teeth by 15 months. Most often we see the front teeth (incisors) first, followed by the molars, and finally the canines (cuspid teeth).



Most often teething causes drooling and a desire to gnaw on anything the baby can get a hold of. There may be swelling and tenderness at the site where the tooth is erupting. Occasionally we will see mild irritability and minor temperature changes.

- **Temperatures over 100 degrees** should not be attributed to teething. This most likely indicates an illness of some kind.
- **Severe pain, prolonged fussiness, or inconsolability** are not likely the result of a teething. Children with significant discomfort should be examined to look for other causes.

Most of the time, teething can be managed without the use of medication. Try rubbing or gently massaging the gums around the site of the new tooth. Firm rubber teething rings are also very helpful, especially if chilled in the refrigerator. (Frozen items can sometimes be too hard and even damage the gums.) A moist washcloth (cold or warm) can also be used. Be careful of food items that may break off and cause choking hazards.

Acetaminophen and ibuprofen may also be used and are very effective for teething pain. (Dosing discussed in a separate document.) Topical pain gels are also available, but should be used with caution as they have occasionally resulted in potentially dangerous levels of medication.

Relax! Teething is normal. Everyone goes through it and lives to bite another day :)