



The Tooth of it!

Teething Fact Sheet & Advice

Teething..... uh... it sucks doesn't it! If you're downloading this then you are no doubt, not blessed with one of the few babies that sail through this process without so much of a squeak! You don't have one of those babies that a shiny white line appears out of the blue and you're shocked as they happily continue about their business! Well this fact sheet is for you. You will be guided through what to expect and a comprehensive list of solutions and tips! Most of these have been collated from our very own GUMIGEM® customers, who have lived through the experience, survived and kindly passed on their tips!

What is teething?

Teething is simply the arrival of the baby (milk or deciduous) teeth through your baby's gums. I say simply but for many babies it is not simple and they really suffer as a result. It usually starts when your baby is between 6 to 10 months and continues until the age of 3 years when all the 20 baby teeth have come through. However, some babies teethe from as young as three months. In fact 1 in 2000 babies are actually born with teeth!

Teething is different for each baby. For some babies teething is painless, others may be irritable for a short time and some may have a tough time for weeks or even months. Equally some babies don't see their first teeth arrive until long past their first birthday.

Why teething is uncomfortable?

Teething is uncomfortable because there is a lot of movement and change in the jawbone as the teeth move into the gum. That's why you can often see signs of teething long before the pearly whites break through. This should stop as soon as the tooth appears. The molars (back teeth) can be especially uncomfortable because they are larger teeth.

Signs and symptoms of teething

The common signs and symptoms of teething that you may notice in your baby are:

- being bad tempered or irritable
- crying more than usual
- having trouble sleeping
- having problems feeding, changing what they want to eat or not wanting to eat
- wanting to chew on things e.g. toys, fingers, or a GUMIGEM®! etc ·
- drooling or being more dribbly than usual
- having swollen gums

· having red, hot cheeks ·

pain

However there are a whole host of symptoms that many feel are also associated with teething:

- Runny nose
- Nappy rash
- Diarrhoea
- Cough

Cool to drool!

Few babies go through teething without some level of drool! Some however can be like Niagra Falls and a bib is essential to prevent changing tops every five minutes! Try and keep the chin and neck dry by using a soft dry cloth to wipe, but don't rub as their skin can be sore, some develop quite a nasty rash. It may help to use a barrier cream for particularly dribbly babies

Teething does not make your baby ill

However it has been proven that teething doesn't make a baby unwell. The signs and symptoms that you may notice occur partly because teething begins at the same time that your baby's immune system is changing. At this time many babies will have lost most of their protective antibodies passed from their mothers. This can make them more susceptible to infections and illness until their own antibodies increase.

Health problems not likely to be caused by teething include:

- waking a lot at night
- being restless and irritable in the daytime
- infections
- a temperature (fever)

If your baby seems unwell, seek medical advice

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How does it all happen?

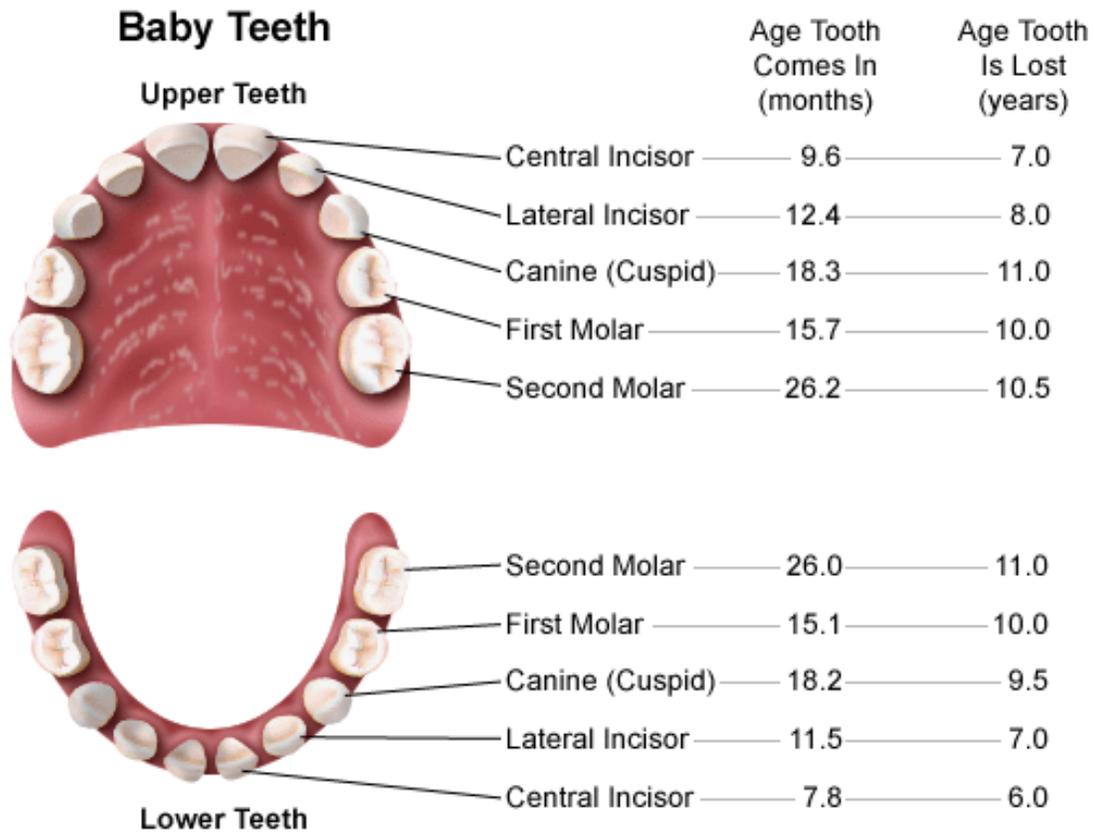
I love to shop and I am partial to shoes, perhaps because they come in pairs! A bit like our children's teeth! Most come in pairs, however some don't. It's a unique process for every baby. On average it's around six months that they start to appear, so let's take things in order of how they happen!

The first to break through tend to be the bottom pair central, usually just a few months before the top central pair. These are called 'Incisors'. These teeth are knife like and assist in cutting through food! Perfect timing for weaning! But there are another four Incisors still to come and usually one arrives at each side of the bottom two central teeth, followed by one either side of the top two central teeth.

Next up are the 'Pre-Molars' usually they show up for the party around 12- 18 months, they have eight of these bad boys to break through (two of these are what is commonly referred to as canines or fangs! The Pre-Molars job is grinding food. The pre molars are quirky and although still come in pairs they skip a space. So

miss the fang and then two teeth on each side at the bottom and the same at the top. After that the other 'pre-molars' or the fang type canines fill in the gaps top and bottom.

Finally the biggest of the bad boys come! The Second Molars, these are slow and don't start making an appearance until around 20-24 months. These lads also help crush and grind food. Now, let's take a guess, how do you think they arrive... yup, in pairs again! Two in the bottom, one on either side and two in the top, one on either side. So by the time your baby has grown up and is a two year old, they will have a wonderful set of 20 teeth (8 Incisors, 8 Pre-Molars and 4 Second Molars). If you want to see this visually:



So what causes all the pain?

It's mainly from all the pressure exerted on the gum tissue in the mouth, otherwise known as the 'Periodontal Membrane'. This membrane contains blood vessels and sensory nerve endings, which stimulate pain and touch. Understandably this pressure and pushing can cause swelling of the gums. This is why a baby's first instinct when teething is to chomp and bite down on everything. This helps relieve the pressure and can assist the teeth in breaking through. GUMIGEMS® are great for this, as are many other teething aids.

While this process happens, the gums start to produce excess saliva, this is supposed to help them by lubricating the tender gums. Drooling brings with it another set of issues! Soggy tops and rashes on the chin and the neck. The best thing is to try and keep the skin as dry as possible and tops dry by using a bib!

Teething Solutions

If you look at the history of teething and teething remedies one of the oldest and most effective has to be the teething ring. The first reference to this is over 3000 years ago on the Sumerian sandstone tablets. In the 1600's in Vienna bagels were given as gifts to new mothers who would use these to allow babies to bite down on them to relieve pain and discomfort.

You will all be familiar with the saying 'born with a silver spoon in his mouth'. Would it surprise you to know this apparently originates from trying to find a solution to teething too! Fortunately things have moved on, but the teething ring remains a firm favorite in many

different forms from 'Sophie le giraffe' to standard teething rings and of course a gorgeous GUMIGEM® necklace, bangle or teething toy. All of these are made from rubber or silicone which is non toxic, allows a baby to relieve discomfort by having a hard bite on them, but without fear of it causing wear or damage to the new baby teeth. Be wary of letting your child chew on things that are particularly hard. Many dentists feel this is not ideal, as there is a potential risk it can cause wear on the teeth. I guess that's why we don't see babies still chomping on silver spoons and things have evolved! Teething toys and rings remain the most popular teething remedy for mothers, mainly because they are mostly free of harmful chemicals unlike many teething gels. There is so much available on the market for teething, in a range of colours, shapes and styles, you are bound to find something that suits your baby. Most people use a combination of products.



Caring for teething toys:

You can chill a teething toy in the fridge – but never freeze as it may damage it.

Wash them regularly – check whether they can be sterilised or put in the dishwasher, not all can. If they are made of silicone they cannot breed mold or bacteria.

If the teether gets damaged throw it away! Tears and breaks can be a hazard

What else can we do?

Babies can become very upset when teething and is it any wonder! We can only be thankful they don't remember it! Here are a few ideas to help:

Cooling or freezing a facecloth and letting your baby chew on it. You can even dip it in something like

chamomile tea before cooling as it's known to have very effective anti-inflammatory properties.

Ice cube remedy. Simply wrap ice cubes in a hanky, secure it and crush the cubes. You can even freeze breast milk for this too!

Keeping chunks of cucumber, melon, carrot sticks in the fridge.

Teething gels have a place and can be effective, but don't overuse them, there is some evidence to suggest it can affect a babies gag reflex. Many people also find teething gels, hard to apply and too slippery.

Homeopathic teething powders e.g. Nelsons Teetha and Ashton Parsons powder – many people swear by these and they are easier to administer. Beware if your baby is lactose intolerant and check the labels.

Amber teething anklets (beware of any products your baby wears around their neck for safety reasons) choose Baltic amber. Baltic Amber contains Succinic Acid, a known analgesic reputed to boost the immune system, reduce inflammation and accelerate the healing of wounds. When worn by your little one the warmth of their body releases the amber's natural oils into the skin, soothing and providing a completely natural remedy to the misery of teething aches and pains.

Jaw massage, some will like this, some will hate it! But simply rub the jaw and gums.

Distraction and cuddles

Most of the time it's bad for about 3 days as the teeth come to the surface and break through.

So I hope that's of some use! But unfortunately there is no magic answer! The babies get their teeth, grow up and forget about it! We however suffer sleepless nights and the agony of seeing our babies in discomfort. But the best advice I can give, is a large dose of patience and regular dosing of cuddles and distraction. It will pass!