

# Teething:

# What can I expect?

## Oral health for babies

A baby's first teeth appear before their first birthday in a process called teething.

### Teething is a natural process

Your baby is born with a set of 20 teeth hidden beneath the gums. Teething is the process of these teeth working their way through the gums. The first teeth normally appear between six and 10 months of age with the rest following over the next two to three years. This is a guide; each child is different.

It is important that these first teeth are kept healthy, as they each keep a place for the adult teeth that come later. The natural loss of a baby's first teeth and arrival of adult teeth usually happens between the ages of six years and 12 years. The first adult teeth to appear are four molars. They come in behind the baby molars.

### There are common signs of teething

Teething can cause minor discomfort for your baby. You might notice the following signs as teeth begin to appear through their gums. There is no need to worry; it is all part of the teething process. Your baby may:

- drool
- be more cranky and irritable
- have red cheeks and red, swollen gums
- show a need to chew on things.

### Do not confuse teething with illness

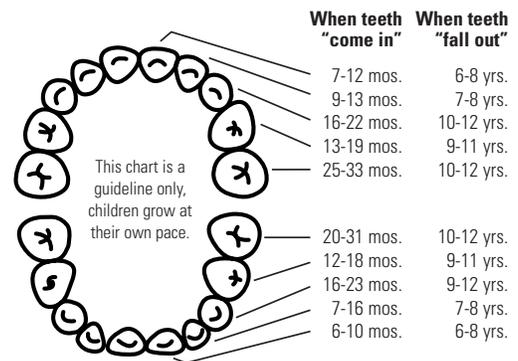
Fever, stuffiness, runny nose or diarrhea are *not* signs of teething. Blaming teething for these symptoms could delay the diagnosis of an ear infection, urinary tract infection, meningitis or other bacterial or viral infection.



## You can help your baby during teething

Follow these tips to help your baby cope safely with teething:

- Directly massage an irritated, swollen gum with your finger for a couple of minutes. Massaging the gum with a clean, wet cloth that has been chilled in the refrigerator also works well.
- Babies massage their own gums by chewing on hard, smooth objects. Give them a teething ring, or a wet cloth that has been chilled.
- Give your child a piece of chilled banana. Avoid hard foods like raw carrots that could cause choking.
- If these suggestions don't seem to help, an infant's dose of acetaminophen (over-the-counter pain reliever) can be given for one day. Over-the-counter gels for teething should not be used unless advised by your doctor.



For more information contact:  
 INFOline 1-800-268-1154 – Toronto 416-314-5518  
 TTY 1-800-387-5559  
[www.gov.on.ca/health](http://www.gov.on.ca/health)  
 or your local public health unit

Version française disponible en communiquant avec le  
 1 800 268-1154 – Toronto 416 314-5518  
 ATS 1 800 387-5559  
[www.gov.on.ca/health](http://www.gov.on.ca/health)

Based on materials developed by the City of Ottawa,  
 People Services Department