

# Teething trouble

## Every baby goes through it

The time when babies get their first primary teeth (milk teeth) varies. A few are born with a tooth already, whilst others have no teeth at one year. Teeth generally start to show when a child is four to nine months old, although every baby develops at their own pace. This is known as teething. Some babies show few signs while others find it more uncomfortable. Some teeth grow with no pain or discomfort at all. At other times you may notice that the gum is sore and red where the tooth is coming through, or that one cheek is flushed. Your baby may dribble, gnaw and chew a lot, or just be fretful.

Some people attribute a wide range of symptoms to teething, such as diarrhoea and fever. However, there is no research to prove that these other symptoms are linked. You know your baby best. If their behaviour seems unusual, or their symptoms are severe or causing you concern, talk to your health visitor.

Think about your child's tooth care routine. You can brush their teeth with a soft baby toothbrush and a smear of baby toothpaste. Make sure you see your dentist regularly and discuss your child's oral health with them.

### Pharmacist says

If your baby is uncomfortable, you can buy some medicine from your local pharmacy. These medicines contain a small dose of painkiller, such as paracetamol, to help ease any discomfort. The medicine should also be sugar free.

Make sure you read all instructions and that the product is suitable for the age of your child. You can try sugar free teething gel rubbed on the gum.

### Dentist's tooth care tips:

1. Clean teeth twice a day, for two minutes, especially at night.
2. Reduce sugars to meal times only.
3. Visit the dentist every six months.
4. Don't give juice drinks in a bottle. Your baby may still like using a bottle as a comforter and suck away on it for hours, giving sugar and acid juice plenty of time to damage teeth.

For help accessing an NHS dentist call NHS 111 or visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

### Health visitor says

It can help to give your baby something hard to chew on, such as a teething ring. Some teething rings can be cooled first in the fridge.

All sorts of things are put down to teething - rashes, crying, bad temper, runny noses, extra dirty nappies. Be careful not to explain away what might be the signs of illness by assuming it's just teething.

Try to use a trainer cup from 6 months (see dentist's tooth care tips).

**1**

My baby has red cheeks and seems a bit frustrated and grumpy.

**2**

Have you asked your health visitor about teething? Have you discussed options with your pharmacist?

**3**

Try some of the gels or baby paracetamol available. If you are worried and things do not feel right contact your health visitor or GP.

Source: DoH Birth to five edition 2009, [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)