

Teething

Some babies are born with their first teeth. Others start teething before they are 4 months old, and some after 12 months. But most babies start teething at around 6 months. Baby teeth sometimes emerge with no pain or discomfort at all. At other times, you may notice that:

- your baby's gum is sore and red where the tooth is coming through
- one cheek is flushed
- your baby is dribbling more than usual
- they are gnawing and chewing on things a lot
- they are more fretful than usual

Some people think that teething causes other symptoms, such as diarrhoea and fever, but there's no evidence to support this.

How do manage teething and treat?

Teething can be distressing for some babies, but there are ways to make it easier for them. Every baby is different, and you may have to try a few different things until you find something that works for your baby.

- **Teething rings** - Teething rings give your baby something to chew safely. This may ease their discomfort and distract them from any pain.
If your baby is six months or older, you can give them healthy things to chew on, such as raw fruit and vegetables. Pieces of apple or carrot are ideal. You could also try giving your baby a crust of bread or a breadstick. It's best to avoid rusks, because nearly all brands contain some sugar.
Always stay close when your baby is eating in case they choke.
- **Teething gels** - For babies over four months old, you can rub sugar-free teething gel on their gums. You can get teething gel from your local pharmacy. Your pharmacist will advise you which is the most appropriate for your baby.
- **Comforting or playing** with your baby can distract them from any pain in their gums.
- If teething is making your baby dribble more than usual, gently wiping their face often may help to prevent a rash.
- **Speak to your pharmacist** - for advice if you're not sure which type of medicine is best for you and your symptoms.

Looking after your babies teeth

You'll need to register your baby with a dentist when their teeth start coming through. Start brushing your baby's teeth with fluoride toothpaste as soon as their first milk tooth breaks through. Avoid any foods that contain lots of sugar, as this can cause tooth decay, even if your child only has a few teeth. Never dip dummies in sweet substances, such as honey, jam or sugar

When should I seek advice?

You know your baby best. Get medical advice if they have any symptoms that are causing you concern. You can call NHS 111, visit your local pharmacy or contact your GP or health visitor. For early signs of tooth decay visit your NHS dentist.

More information is available at the following websites

- NHS Choices - www.nhs.uk
- Stay Well Derbyshire – www.nhsstaywellderbyshire.co.uk
- Or visit your local pharmacy for advice