

## **Teething**

### **What is teething?**

Teething is a natural process in infants and young children. Teething occurs when a tooth works its way through (erupts) the gums. Sometimes this is referred to as “cutting a tooth.” An infant’s first tooth usually comes at about 6 months of age. Between 6 and 24 months, most of the baby (primary) teeth come in.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Some of the more common symptoms of teething are:

- Increased saliva
- Drooling
- The desire to chew things
- Gum discomfort or pain
- Low-grade fever

### **What can I do for my child?**

Some comfort measures can be taken to help your child feel better. These include the following:

- Rub the swollen gum with a clean finger.
- Offer your infant or child something cold to chew on. A wet washcloth that has been chilled in the refrigerator is a good choice. Do not give your child ice to chew or Popsicles to eat, as they can be too cold.
- Offer your child a hard object to chew on such as a teething ring or teething biscuit. Do not give your child hard foods that could cause choking such as raw carrots.
- For pain relief, give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 4 to 6 hours or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) every 6 to 8 hours as needed. Special teething gels can help numb the gums but the effect doesn’t last long. Gels should not be used more than 4 times a day.

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## What else do I need to know?

- Children may have looser stools than usual while teething. This is normal. An ointment such as Vaseline can be put on the skin after diaper changes to prevent diaper rash.
- When infants have gum pain when teething, they may refuse bottle feedings. If this happens, try to give formula or milk from a cup. Your child may also be less interested in eating solid foods during the time new teeth are coming in.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child:

- Has prolonged crying.
- Acts ill (has no energy, is not interested in eating or drinking or is crabby).
- Has a temperature over 101.5 F (38.5C).
- Has special health care needs that were not addressed in this teaching sheet.

**This teaching sheet is meant to provide you with additional information about your child's care. Diagnosis, treatment and follow-up care should be provided by a health care professional.**