



## Teething

Teething can be a very painful and stressful time for your infant. Learn what you can do to ease the pain.

Teething occurs between 6 months and 24 months of age although it can occur earlier. Normally the bottom two incisors (front most teeth) will come in, followed by the top four incisors. Children will often drool excessively or gnaw on any hard object they can find.

The child's gums may appear tender and swollen; often, in fact, the cheeks near the affected gums will become red. While most children go through the teething experience without any pain, some toddlers are not so lucky. These children may be extremely irritable.

To help your child, rub the gums with a clean wet finger or use a cold spoon to gently rub the gums. This will help ease the pain and often soothes an irritated child.

Chilled teething rings are another popular option. When using a teething ring, make sure it is chilled but not frozen, as frozen teething rings may cause frostbite to lips and gums.

Many parents allow their children to chew on a clean cold wash rag or wrap cold ice in a washcloth and allow children to chew on this. If you do, please watch your child to make sure they don't accidentally choke on ice that may work its way out of the washcloth.

Other parents provide a cold carrot or celery stick to chew on. Once again if you chose this option do not leave your child unattended as they could choke on loose pieces of celery or carrot. Providing "teething biscuits" or other hard foods (frozen bananas) is not a good idea as these promote tooth decay.

Often parents associate certain symptoms with teething when, in fact, these symptoms may actually represent an illness or infection. Remember, a diaper rash, high fever, diarrhea, inability to sleep through the night, and vomiting are not associated with teething. If your child displays any of these signs, see a pediatrician immediately.

Teething can be an uncomfortable situation for many children but as a parent you can help ease or completely eliminate your child's discomfort.