

Teething

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Most babies start 'cutting teeth' at around 6 months, although it's not unusual to see a first tooth as early as 3 months and some babies can even be born with teeth – although it's not common. For other babies, it can take a while longer but if they haven't started teething by their first birthday, it's best to let your health visitor know.

On average, girls teethe earlier than boys. The arrival of your baby's first tooth is completely independent of their other physical and mental development.

The cause of teething pain

As the roots of your baby's teeth grow, the upper edges of the teeth are pushed through the gums, which is often uncomfortable. The unfamiliar sensations of the first few teeth coming through often cause the most restlessness and irritability. Cutting molars can also be a difficult time because of their larger size.

Teething signs

The discomfort of teething can start before a tooth is visible. The following symptoms are common while teething:

- Demanding more attention and crying more at night.
- Flushed, rosy cheeks.
- A slightly high temperature (39°C or higher indicates a fever rather than teething).
- Red, swollen gums.
- Dribbling more than usual.
- Chewing on their hands or other objects.
- Demanding more feeds.
- Rejecting feeds because their gums hurt.
- A smaller appetite than usual.
- A disrupted sleep routine.

Gently rubbing a teething gel or granules into your baby's gums can help to ease their discomfort. Specially made teething rings can also provide some relief, especially the ones designed to be chilled in the fridge.

If your baby is drooling, be sure to keep them well hydrated with extra water. A barrier cream on their chin, neck and chest can prevent soreness from excess dribble.

For minor pain, a comforting cuddle or an interesting toy may prove enough to take their mind off the teething sensations. Your doctor may recommend an infant pain reliever like paracetamol or ibuprofen if they're more sensitive.

Most babies go through teething pain so the experienced mums on our Careline have plenty of advice to share. Call them on **08457 623 628**, Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm or start a Live Chat on our instant online messaging service between 9am and 5pm.