

❖ **TEETHING**

Teething is a natural part of growing up and can start from as young as 3 months in some children. Although I don't like using the word 'normal'; typical growth of teeth occurs at the various ages and stages until they are 2-3 years old.

AGE	TEETHING GROWTH
5 months	Teeth starting cutting through the gum
6 months	First ones; usually bottom 2 middle teeth
6-12 months	Upper two middle teeth
10-12 months	The bottom teeth right of the two middle ones
10-13 months	Upper teeth right of the two middle ones
12-18 months	The first molars (back teeth) on top and bottom
16-22 months	The canines on top and bottom
20-31 months	The very back teeth on bottom; second molars
25-33 months	The very back teeth on top; second molars
2-3 years	Full set of 20 Baby teeth ☺

Teething is often a time when your child will be grumpy, dribbling excessively, have more runny nappies and nose, constantly putting things in their mouths and you may be able to feel hardness/inflammation on the gums of the mouth and see white on the gums as their teeth start to 'cut' through.

How do you treat this pain in children?

Essentially teething is associated with inflammation as the teeth 'cut' through the gums. Therefore the first line treatment should be an anti-inflammatory liquid such as Nurofen for Children or Advil for Children after food every 6 to 8 hours; should provide them with great relief. As with an uncontrolled pain and fever, if teething pain is not controlled alone with Ibuprofen then it is sensible to add Children's Panadol every 4 to 6 hours as this will relieve pain in a different way.

As discussed in the pain article, Codeine is an extra pain reliever but is only suitable for children over 2 years old and since most teeth have come through by this age it is not a suitable option.

What other suggestions do you have?

Using teething rings especially if they are cold or have been put into the freezer will allow them to bite down hard without hurting or injuring their gums. There are also food meshes that you can put hard frozen fruit in so that they can bite down and get a nice taste of the fruit too! Also very simply you can give them a soft child toothbrush without the toothpaste to press down hard on as the soft bristles may provide some comfort.

There are teething necklaces that are supposed to relieve pain and can be purchased online or from health food stores. There has been varying feedback; some mothers swear by them and others do not. They are a natural product so it saves you from constantly giving your child medication and as long as it is not too tight around the neck it is unlikely to do any harm trying if you're at your wits end!

There is also the homeopathic Brauer Teething Relief liquid available that may provide relief of teething symptoms and can be a great addition to all other treatments!! Being natural I always like to recommend it as it may mean you need to use medications less...and that's always a good thing!

Hylands teething relief gel is a homeopathic product that can provide relief to their teething symptoms. There is a generic brand of the tablets that replace the Hylands brand that was discontinued. A lot of Mummy's swear by this and again being homeopathic it often feels safer and gentle to the child; although I am unsure if studies are conclusive either way!

Bonjela is a topical gel that you can apply on your baby's gums from 4 months of age that may give pain relief and reduce the inflammation. It is not to be used in younger ages as there have been reports of gagging and choking; so it is not TGA approved for young babies. If they are aspirin or salicylate sensitive, then you should not use this on them. Unfortunately, at this age it may be unknown if they are sensitive so watch the baby to see for any signs of wheezing, changes in breathing or anything unusual occurs in your child after using it. You can apply it every 3 to 4 hours with your finger or a cotton tip.

SM33 is a gel that can be applied to children's gums from 6 months old. It is the strongest gel available for children as it contains a local anaesthetic to numb the gums for at least 3 to 4 hours as well as help reduce inflammation. However, it has the same precautions with Aspirin and Salicylate sensitivities and be careful when feeding them warm foods as their mouths are numb and can burn themselves if too hot.

I would possibly recommend a combination and/or rotation of the products during this time as your child may get bored using one particular method and their symptoms can range throughout from being mild to severe. So tailor the treatment according to how they are going.

There are also several jewellery that can be worn by the babies or their mother, either to help alleviate the symptoms or for the child to chew on and rub their gums. There is always a risk of choking for small children, so caution and care should always be taken should this decision be made. Supervision is recommended and any necklaces should be removed prior to sleeping in case injury does occur whilst they are unattended.