



AUSTRALIAN DENTAL
ASSOCIATION

Terrible Teething

Soothing your teething tot

It's usually not very difficult to tell if your baby has started teething. Around 4-7 months you'll notice frequent crying, red cheeks, more drooling, problems sleeping, and general fussiness. You might even notice your little one is refusing food or is trying to nibble anything he or she can get their hands on!

It's teething time

Teething isn't much fun for anyone. Seeing your child distressed or being woken up in the middle of the night can be difficult, but remember your baby has teeth breaking through their gums for the very first time, ouch!

It's important to remain patient and it's natural to feel a little helpless. While there is no magic cure for teething there are some tricks that can help soothe the pain and keep things quiet(er), at least for a little while.

Soothing your teething tot

Each child is different and sometimes you have to use trial and error to get results. The first thing to remember when you have a teething tot is that distracting them from the pain will help, and there are a variety of ways you can do this. First, try affection and attention. Giving your baby plenty of cuddles and extra attention can help keep their mind off their mouth for some short term relief.

Some light pressure with something cold can also help relieve sore gums, like gently rubbing or massaging the gums with a clean finger or a cold spoon. Just remember, not too hard and not too cold! A chilled washcloth can also do the trick.

There are a range of teething rings available for babies to gnaw on. Chilled (not frozen) teething rings offer temporary pain relief through the pressure and cold and act as a distraction. Teething rings can be attached to your babies clothing, but never tie anything around the neck as it risks strangulation.

Lots of parents choose to let their baby suck or chew on a dummy (pacifiers) as this can settle a restless baby and provide temporary relief. Using dummies is OK as long as you don't put anything sweet on them like honey or jam (or you'll cause decay!).

Children who are eating solids can also use remedies such as hardened sugar-free rusks, peeled cucumber or frozen carrots large enough that they cannot be swallowed.

TEETHING PRACTICES TO AVOID

DON'T add sugar, honey, or jam to the tip of a babies bottle, or dip a dummy in honey. This does not help pain relief and will cause dental decay.

DON'T add medicines to your child's food or bottle.

AVOID the use of Amber necklaces and bracelets as they pose a choking risk.

If these measures fail to provide relief for teething, ask your dentist or pharmacist for advice before using any pain medication or oral gels that contain a local anaesthetic.

Should your child present with symptoms not outlined above, do not assume they are simply teething. Symptoms such as diarrhoea, rashes (other than those caused by drooling irritation) and fever are not symptomatic of teething and your child should see a healthcare professional to rule out other illness.

For more information on oral health visit ada.org.au

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