



Teething: What is Fact and What is Fiction?

A Quick Guide for Parents

Teething is a major milestone for your baby, but it often comes with a lot of confusion. Is that fever because of a tooth? Is the runny nose normal? Here is a simple guide to help you navigate this stage safely.

What is NORMAL During Teething?

Between 6 and 24 months, as teeth break through the gums, you will likely see:

- **Fussiness & Irritability:** Especially at night or during quiet times.
- **Swollen or Tender Gums:** You may see a small "bump" or redness where the tooth is coming in.
- **Heavy Drooling:** This can sometimes cause a mild rash around the mouth (keep it dry with a soft cloth!).
- **Gnawing & Chewing:** Babies will want to put everything in their mouths to relieve the pressure.
- **Slight Temperature Increase:** The body temperature might go up very slightly, but generally stays **under 100.4°F (38°C)**.

What is NOT Caused by Teething? (The Myths)

If your child has these symptoms, please **do not assume it is just teething**. These are usually signs of an illness that needs attention:

- **True Fever:** A temperature over 100.4°F (38°C) is rarely caused by teething.
- **Diarrhea or Vomiting:** "Teething diarrhea" is a myth. Loose stools are likely due to a virus or a tummy bug.

- **Runny Nose or Cough:** Teething does not cause cold symptoms.
- **Rash on Body:** A rash on the face (from drool) is normal; a rash on the belly, back, or arms is not.

🛡 How to Help Your Baby (The Do's)

You don't need fancy gadgets. Simple mechanical help works best!

1. **Gum Massage:** Wash your hands and gently rub your baby's gums with your finger. The pressure is very soothing.
2. **Cool It Down:** Use a solid rubber teething ring that has been chilled in the **fridge**. Cold reduces swelling and numbs the pain.
3. **Chew Toys:** Clean, solid toys meant for chewing are great.
4. **Medicine:** If the baby is very miserable and nothing else works, you can give an age-appropriate dose of Acetaminophen (Paracetamol) or Ibuprofen (only if over 6 months). Ask us for the correct dosage.

⚠ What to AVOID (The Don'ts)

- **NO Numbing Gels:** Avoid gels containing Benzocaine (like Orajel) or Lidocaine. These are not safe for infants and can cause serious blood oxygen issues.
- **NO Frozen Rings:** If a ring is frozen solid, it can be too hard and bruise the delicate gums.
- **NO Teething Necklaces:** Amber beads or necklaces are a serious choking and strangulation hazard. They are not medically proven to work.
- **NO Homeopathic Teething Tablets:** These are not regulated and have been found to contain inconsistent ingredients that may be unsafe.

💡 When to Call the Doctor:

If your baby has a fever over 101°F, diarrhea, is pulling at their ears excessively, or seems inconsolable, please get back for an examination. It is likely an infection, not just a tooth!

