

AS SEEN IN

Is My Baby Teething?

by Dr. Glenn V. Hemberger, D.D.S., M.S.

How can such a universally occurring event be the source of so much misinformation, particularly among parents and grandparents of new babies?

WHAT IS TEETHING?

Teething is the actual eruption or the "breaking through" the gums of the primary (baby) teeth. All teeth form below the gums long before they can be seen. The teething process is the tooth's actual movement through the gum to become visible in the mouth. The first tooth eruption usually occurs between the ages of 6-10 months, with the last baby tooth breaking through between months 25 and 33. Parents should not be distressed if their child's tooth development does not fall in this range. If no teeth have broken through by the second birthday parents should consult their Pediatrician or Pediatric Dentist.

WHERE DO TEETH ERUPT?

Although the sequence of tooth eruption can vary, generally the first teeth to erupt will be the two lower front teeth followed by the upper front primary teeth. The last to break through are the "2 year" primary molars. This chart illustrates the most common sequence of tooth eruption.

When babies start to fuss parents question whether it's teething or something more serious that is troubling their precious one.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

Most misinformation about teething occurs with the signs and symptoms. Let's first consider what teething does NOT cause. It does NOT cause vomiting, diarrhea, ear aches, convulsions, coughing, persistent loss of appetite or a fever above 102°F. While many of these symptoms often occur during teething, they are likely caused by

viruses which can strike 4-8 times during baby's first year.

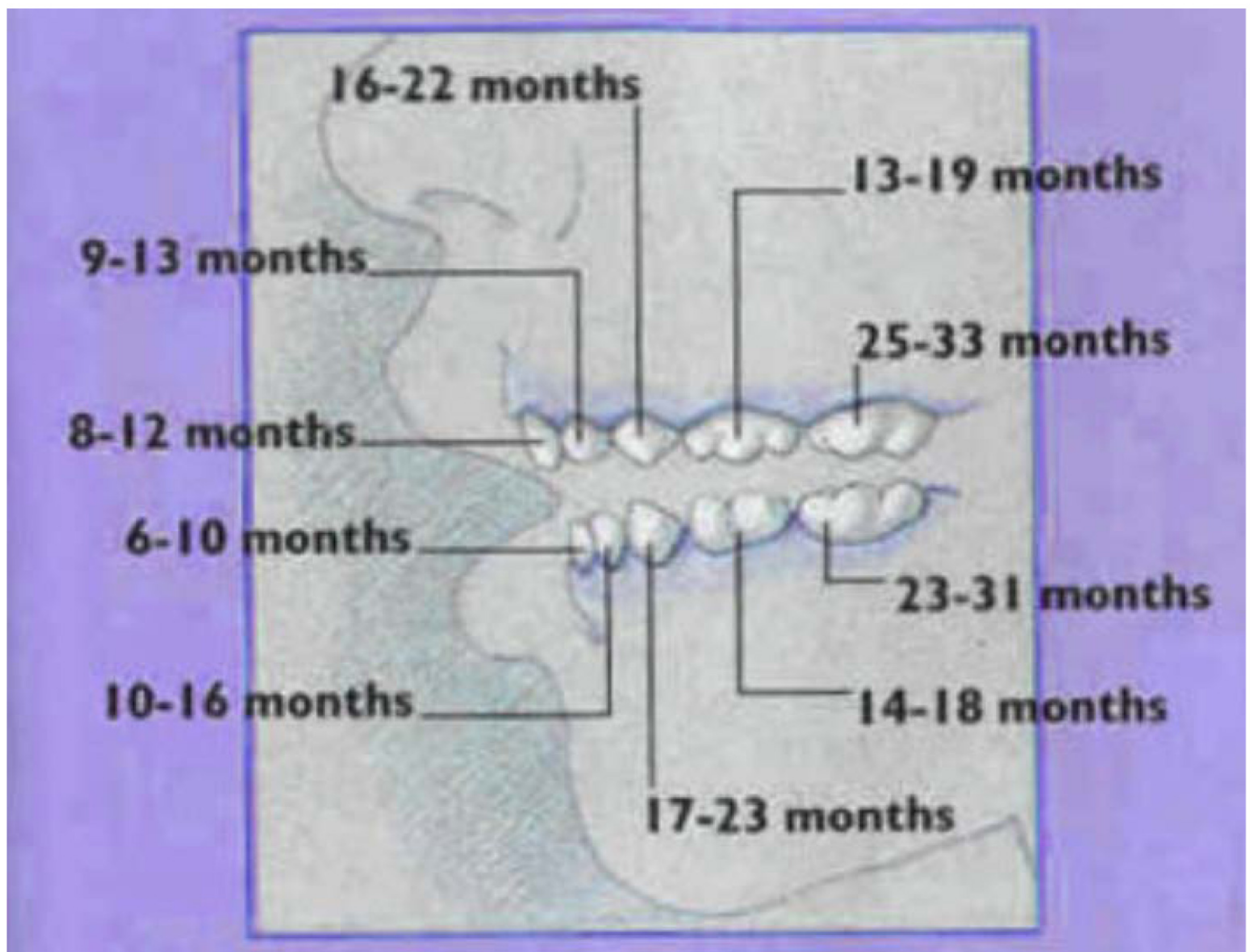
Symptoms that CAN clearly be attributed to teething are itchy swollen gums, excessive drooling, irritability, crying spells, and an urge to chew everything in sight. Some babies will run a low grade fever which should remain below 102°F.

TIPS FOR PARENTS:

The first suggestion is what NOT to do. You should NOT rub harsh chemi-



surface items, such as cold teething rings, cold wash cloths, or chilled spoons, relieve the itching and help the tooth erupt. Avoid cold foods since they may break-off and pose a choking risk. Non-aspirin analgesics, such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen can be given according to package directions. If everything else fails, try distraction by rocking your



cals such as brandy or whiskey or crushed baby aspirin on the baby's gums. These substances, even in small amounts, can be toxic and will increase the irritation to the gum tissue.

What DOES work is allowing your baby to chew cold items. Chewing soothes swollen gums and helps the new teeth break through the surface. Cold

child, or taking them out for a ride.

When we know what to expect and are armed with a few simple tools most of the stress can be taken out of teething time.

Dr. Glenn V. Hemberger, D.D.S., M.S. specializes in dental care from baby's first check-up (12-18 months) to preventative care. He also provides orthodontic care.

