

## Teething

- 1.) **Definition:** Teething is the normal process of new teeth working through the gums. It can begin in infants as early as four months old, even though the first tooth may not appear until 1 year of age. The first tooth to come through is usually one of the two lower central incisors. Occasionally, before the tooth erupts, you may notice a bruise or swelling on the overlying gum. There may be a small amount of bleeding when the tooth first cuts through. These are all normal occurrences.

Teething may or may not be accompanied by discomfort. In fact, most teeth appear without any signs of pain. Teething might be associated with loose stools, cold symptoms, or mild elevation of temperature.

Babies have difficulty localizing or finding the source of their discomfort. Many babies, while they are teething, will bat their head or pull at their ears. When babies pull their ears, especially when there are no signs of a cold or fever, there is usually no ear infection. In fact, many babies rub or pull their ears for comfort when they are tired. If you are uncertain, see the section on **EAR INFECTIONS**.

2.) **Treatment:**

- a.) The simplest treatment is gum massage. Massage the irritated gum with your finger. You could even try a small piece of ice.
- b.) Teething rings (you might refrigerate first, but don't freeze), cold washcloths, frozen bananas, stale bagels, teething biscuits, and popsicles are all safe to try. (Supervise your child while using these in case of choking.)
- c.) If your child is still having difficulty, especially during the night, it's ok to try acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin). See **FEVER** for the proper dose.
- d.) Teething gels that numb the gums usually do not work, taste bad, and may be harmful if swallowed.

3.) **Call our office during regular hours if:**

You have tried all the recommended teething treatments and your child is still cranky.

4.) **Call our office urgently if:**

Teething is not an emergency and should not require an after hours call or a trip to the ER.