

Puppy Teething 101: What to Watch Out For



Puppies have 28 baby teeth: six incisors, two canines and six premolars on both the top and bottom.

Here are a few facts about puppy teeth:

- Puppies are born toothless and remain so for several weeks.
- The first baby teeth, the canines, emerge at 3 to 5 weeks of age, followed by the incisors at 4 to 6 weeks.
- Their premolars erupt around 5 to 6 weeks of age. Puppies do not have molars — that really big tooth near the rear of the mouth you probably think is a molar is called the carnassial tooth, and it is actually a premolar.
- The puppy will eventually have 28 deciduous (baby) teeth, with six incisors, two canines and six premolars on both top and bottom.
- Compared to adult teeth, the baby teeth are very sharp.

How to Alleviate Your Puppy's Gum Pain

As the teeth are coming in, your puppy's [gums may hurt](#). You can help by giving him chew toys in a variety of textures. A toy that can be soaked in or filled with water and frozen will provide your puppy with a cold teething object, which can be particularly soothing.

Make sure whatever you give him does not resemble anything of yours that you don't want him to chew — this means no old shoes! Don't give him anything that resembles something he can find around the house, either: no socks and no stuffed animals (if you have children who collect them). What your puppy learns to chew on at an early age will tend to be what he looks to chew on for the rest of his life.

Even at this early age, you may notice occlusion problems, or issues with how the upper and lower teeth fit together. Ideally, for most breeds, the upper incisors fit snugly just in front of the lower ones, and the lower canine is just in front of the upper one. In some flat-faced breeds, it's normal for the jaw to be undershot, with the lower incisors in front of the upper ones, and in some puppies, there may be a small gap between the upper and lower incisors. This very often [improves on its own by adulthood](#).

But in other puppies, the upper jaw may jut out well beyond the lower jaw, and the upper canine tooth may be placed in front of the lower canine tooth. This is an abnormal bite that probably will not get better. As these puppies mature, you must make sure that the short lower jaw, which narrows toward the end, is not so short and narrow that the lower canines jab into the upper gums or roof of the mouth (a condition called base-narrow

canines). Resolution of this issue depends on the extent of the problem. Some options include tooth removal, orthodontic movement of the teeth and crown reduction.

By 3 to 4 months of age, the baby incisors and canines are replaced by permanent ones, followed by the permanent premolars at 4 to 5 months of age. The molars come in around 4 to 6 months of age. The adult [dog](#) normally has 42 teeth.

When to Consult Your Veterinarian

Retention of baby teeth is a common problem; this happens if the permanent tooth bud doesn't grow immediately beneath the baby tooth, so the roots of the baby tooth aren't reabsorbed as they normally are. This happens most often with the canine teeth. If the baby tooth stays there for more than a week it can interfere with the puppy's occlusion, especially if he's a toy dog, so you should consult your veterinarian if you suspect this is happening.

Sometimes a baby tooth just remains in place, with no visible permanent tooth. Never have a retained baby tooth pulled without first checking to make sure a permanent tooth is ready to take its place. Sometimes, in toy breeds especially, the permanent tooth never develops and the baby tooth is the best you'll get!

As your puppy grows he'll need more chewing toys — even once he's through teething. Assemble a group of dog toys and only let your puppy have a few at a time, rotating them every few days so he has the excitement of new toys. Be sure to include some interactive toys, such as those he must work at in order to extract food. You can fill these with kibble, soft cheese, canned dog food or peanut butter and then freeze them to make them last even longer. Some toys dispense kibble a piece at a time as the toy is rolled. With luck, your dog will prefer these fancy toys to your fancy belongings.

Information provided at:

[http://www.vetstreet.com/our-pet-experts/puppy-teething-101-what-to-watch-out-](http://www.vetstreet.com/our-pet-experts/puppy-teething-101-what-to-watch-out-for?WT.z_mod=HPDL&utm_source=explorer.sheknows.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=ske_5554a77b0d2f37d76000011)

[for?WT.z_mod=HPDL&utm_source=explorer.sheknows.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=ske_5554a77b0d2f37d76000011](http://www.vetstreet.com/our-pet-experts/puppy-teething-101-what-to-watch-out-for?WT.z_mod=HPDL&utm_source=explorer.sheknows.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=ske_5554a77b0d2f37d76000011)

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