

Teething & Breastfeeding: Survival guide

Teething varies from baby to baby: a small number are born with teeth already showing through their gums, while others may not get their first tooth until after their first birthday. Generally most Babies get their first teeth at 4-6 months. Many women may face challenges while teething and breastfeeding. Here are a few key points to keep in mind:

1 Signs of teething



Excessive drooling: can cause chin and neck rashes

Crankiness or Fussiness: gum discomfort can cause irritability



Ear pulling: jaw pressure from teething can feel like ear pressure



Chewing on fingers and toys: helps relieve gum pressure



Feeding changes: refusing feeds, shorter feeds or pulling off the breast or bottle

Sleep disturbances: more night wakings or difficulty settling



Gum changes: red, swollen or tender gums with white line

Stool changes: teething can stimulate gut movement due to excessive saliva and can cause loose stools.



SHOULD NOT BE WATERY OR FOUL SMELLING.

2 What to do if baby bites:

Possible reasons for biting include teething, earaches, a stuffy nose, allergies, or the baby's position. Some babies also **clench their jaws involuntarily as they drift off to sleep**. In some cases, there may be no clear reason at all. It's important to remember that babies don't realize that clamping their jaws or biting can hurt you. Although your instinct might be to yelp, try to **respond calmly and work toward a gentle solution**.

It's helpful to remember that when a baby is properly latched during breastfeeding, their tongue covers the lower teeth, making it **unlikely for them to bite you while actively feeding without also biting their own tongue**.



The 3-Step "Stop Biting" Technique

1. Immediately Break the Latch

As soon as your baby bites:

- Insert a clean finger into the corner of their mouth to gently break the latch.
- Remove them from the breast right away.

Do this every single time they bite so the cause-effect becomes clear.

2. Give a Calm, Firm Cue

Look at your baby and say something simple like:

- **"No biting. Biting hurts."**

Keep your tone calm and serious, not angry or loud. Babies quickly start associating the phrase with the action.

3. Pause the Feeding

After removing them:

- Wait 30-60 seconds before offering the breast again.
- A teething toy may also help soothe the baby.
- If they try to bite again, repeat the same steps.

This teaches:

Bite → Milk stops.

Most babies learn within a few days when the response is consistent.

If Baby Clamps Down Hard

Instead of pulling away (which hurts more):

Gently press baby's face closer to your breast for a second. Their nose gets covered slightly → they automatically open their mouth.



How to soothe baby:

Before nursing

- **Numb baby's gums** with damp washcloth wrapped in and ice cube or breast milk cube
- **Massage babies gums**
- **Hand express milk** to get milk flowing which helps baby settle into feeding more quickly



During Nursing

- **Try different positions.** Remind your Baby to open wide
- **Observe if baby gets fidgety.** Break the suction and soothe their gums. Relatch once baby is more comfortable
- **Say baby's name** or hug them close to distract them from clamping down



After nursing

- **Avoid bottles and pacifiers**, as some babies get used to biting down on these to help with teething. This habit can eventually lead them to biting you
- **Offer a sippy cup or straw cup** if baby is old enough to break the habit

