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## Children's Teeth: How to Use and Keep Them (Part I) (1940)

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# *Children's Teeth*

*How to Use and Keep Them*

PART I



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# Children's Teeth—How to Use and Keep Them

## DECIDUOUS TEETH

*What are deciduous teeth?*

They are the first teeth. They come in from about the fourth month to 2 years of age.

*How long should they last?*

Until naturally shed between the ages of 6 and 12 years.

*Are they important?*

Yes. No effort should be spared to keep them.

*Why are they important?*

Because the child needs them to chew its food during the greater part of the most rapid growth period of its life. Because all of the deciduous teeth are in use for six years, and part of them as long as ten years of the child's life.

*Are they as important as the permanent teeth?*

Yes. In health or in disease they have a vital influence over the growth and development of the child's body and mind.

*What are the usual signs of teething in healthy children?*

- An increased flow of saliva.
- A tendency to put the finger or some hard article in the mouth and bite on it.
- Swollen and congested gums.
- Fretfulness and disturbed sleep.
- Often a slight fever.
- Loss of usual appetite.
- Sometimes slight diarrhea.

*How long do these symptoms last?*

Usually only for three or four days, while the teeth are coming through the gums.

*Is teething responsible for many of the ailments it is supposed to cause?*

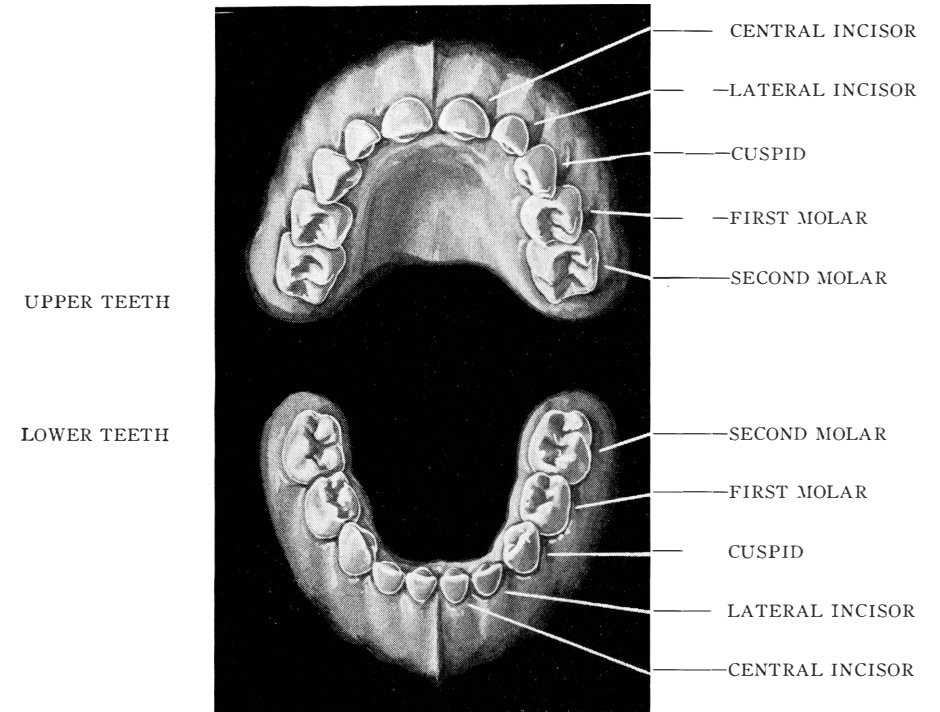
No. Most of the digestive disturbances occurring during babyhood are due to bad feeding and to chilling of the body.

*What may be done to aid teething?*

Give the baby right food, and plenty of cool boiled water. Give it a freshly cooked chicken leg or thigh bone without meat on it, to chew on. A hard dry crust of bread may be given also—as a teething ring.

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## THE DECIDUOUS TEETH



## AGE AT WHICH THEY ERUPT

|                  |         |                      |
|------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Central incisors | - - - - | 6 to 8 months of age |
| Lateral incisors |         | 8 to 10 " "          |
| First molars     | - - - - | 12 to 16 " "         |
| Cuspids          | - - - - | 16 to 20 " "         |
| Second molars    |         | 20 to 30             |

*Is lancing of the gums an aid in difficult teething?*

Sometimes. Great care should be taken to keep the wound clean and so avoid infection after lancing.

*When do deciduous teeth come in, or erupt?*

Refer to the chart on page 3 of this bulletin.

*What may be done to keep the deciduous teeth?*

See that the child has plenty of the kinds of foods that furnish mineral salts and vitamins.

Give the child foods that are cleansing to the teeth.

Teeth the child how to masticate all food thoroughly.

Keep the mouth clean.

Have the teeth examined and treated at least two times a year.

See that the child has plenty of rest and sleep, fresh air and happy play.

*What are the foods which furnish salts and vitamins?*

Milk and other dairy products, green vegetables, especially green leafy vegetables, fruits, breads and cereals made from whole grains.

*Why are these foods necessary in keeping the teeth sound?*

Without a sufficient supply of them the teeth are starved and, because not nourished, are more liable to disease.

*What foods are cleansing to the teeth?*

Fruits, raw vegetables, and coarse, hard foods such as dry toast, zwieback and breads made from whole grains.

*When should the fruits be eaten in order to have best cleansing effect on the teeth?*

At the end of the meal.

*Why is thorough mastication of food necessary?*

For two reasons: First, because satisfactory nourishment of the body, including the teeth and the tissues that support them, depends upon proper digestion of food, and complete digestion of food is possible only when the food has been thoroughly masticated.

Second, because exercise of the teeth and their foundation tissues is necessary to their health and development, and the best way to exercise them is by using them.

*How may the child be taught to masticate its food thoroughly?*

Parents should set an example to their children.

Beginning with the teething period a child should be given a chicken leg or thigh bone (without meat on it) and hard dry crusts of bread made from whole grain flour. This accustoms it to using its jaws on hard foods.

From the very first spoonful of food given it, the child should be fed slowly and encouraged to chew. The cereals and breads must be masticated thoroughly in order to be digested.

After weaning do not feed the child entirely on soft or soaked foods.

As soon as the first temporary molars erupt, hard toast or zwieback (battered) should be given at least with one meal each day.

Do not allow any child to hurry while eating a meal. Hurry prevents proper mastication and digestion. Make the child sit at the table at least twenty minutes.

The parents must be eternally vigilant in encouraging their child to masticate its food sufficiently. There is nothing more important to the health and development of the growing child than the proper preparation, digestion and assimilation of food. Thorough mastication greatly aids these processes.

*Should both sides of the jaws be used for masticating food?*

Yes. It helps in the equal development of both sides of the head.

*Is the daily cleansing of the mouth and teeth necessary?*

Yes. There is danger to the teeth and gums and to the general health if the mouth is not kept clean. An unclean mouth is like a hotbed with fermenting and decomposing food for soil.

*How may the baby's mouth be kept clean?*

The baby's mouth should be let alone until the first teeth come in. The mother's breast should be cleansed during the nursing period with cool boiled water.

*How should the erupting teeth be kept clean?*

A piece of clean gauze or cotton wrapped around the mother's finger and dipped in a normal salt solution should be used to swab out the mouth and to cleanse the first few teeth that erupt.

Normal salt solution— $\frac{1}{2}$  level teaspoonful of salt to 1 glass cool boiled water.

*How often should the teeth be cleansed?*

After each meal.

*Should parts other than the teeth be cleansed?*

Yes, the gums, roof of the mouth, tongue and inside of cheeks and lips.

*How soon may a toothbrush be used?*

As soon as the first eight teeth are fully erupted, a very tiny, soft bristle brush may be used, before cleansing with the gauze or cotton.

*What dentifrice should be used with the brush?*

Normal salt solution. After the age of 2, if desired, an unmedicated toothpaste may be used.

*When may the cleansing of the mouth and teeth be done entirely with a small brush?*

When all twenty of the deciduous teeth are in place.

*In what manner should teeth be brushed?*

There are three good methods of brushing the teeth and gums. For brushing the deciduous teeth the circular stroke method is effective and is easily learned.

To brush the teeth and gums with the circular stroke method, place the brush inside the cheek and with the bristle end touching the teeth. Almost close the teeth and then, with a quick, light stroke in a round and round (circular) direction, brush the cheek and lip side of both upper and lower teeth.

For the tongue side of the teeth place the bristle ends of the brush on the teeth and with a quick, light, in and out stroke brush the gums and teeth of the upper and then of the lower jaw.

The occlusal or grinding surfaces of the teeth may be brushed with an in and out and a side to side stroke of the brush. Cleanse the tongue by brushing it with two or three light strokes.

A second good method of brushing the teeth is known as the rolling stroke method. To brush the teeth and gums with this method place the toothbrush ends of the bristles *up*, for the upper teeth, between the cheek and the gums; turn the brush toward the gums, sweeping the bristles *down* over the gums and teeth to the cutting edges of the teeth. Reverse for the lower teeth and brush *up*.

This motion brushes the cheek side of all teeth and the tongue side of the back teeth.

Brush the inside of the front teeth by putting the brush, bristles up, on the roof of the mouth for the upper teeth and on the floor of the mouth for the lower teeth and pulling the brush outward over the gums and teeth.

Brush the grinding surfaces of the teeth with an in and out and side to side stroke of the brush.

Rinse the brush in clear water frequently while brushing the teeth.

Brush the tongue with two or three light strokes of the brush.

*When should the teeth be brushed?*

The teeth should be brushed for two minutes at least two times each day.

1. Before breakfast, and after breakfast if possible.
2. Before going to bed.

Brush the *gums* and teeth.

Be sure to reach all sides of the rearmost molars.

*What kind of a toothbrush should be used?*

A tiny, single row toothbrush for the baby. For the 2-year-old child, a *small* brush. The brush head should never be longer than  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches. The tufts of bristles should be set far apart and the bristles should be of medium stiffness.

*Why should each person have his own toothbrush?*

There is danger of infection and contagion if another person's is used.

*What care should be given the toothbrush?*

After using, it should be rinsed carefully, the bristles covered with salt and the brush hung up to dry in the sunshine and air. An unclean toothbrush is dangerous.

*How soon should the child be taught to brush its own teeth?*

Begin to teach it the use of the brush as soon as possible. Age 2 is not too soon to start.

*How long should parents themselves give the child's mouth daily care?*

Until the child has learned how to use the toothbrush successfully.

*Should supervision by parents stop when the child has learned how to take good daily care of its mouth?*

No, because without supervision most children fall into habits of neglect and lose interest.

*When should the child first be taken to the dentist for examination?*

Between the ages of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  and 3 years. Earlier if there are any dark spots on the teeth.

*How often should the child's teeth be examined by the dentist?*

At least every six months. This is an excellent plan to follow because any cavities may be cared for promptly.

*Are cavities in children's deciduous teeth common?*

Yes, very.

*What is dental caries?*

A disease which destroys the teeth by producing cavities in them.

*What causes dental caries?*

Food particles left on the sheltered surfaces of the teeth where bacteria, protected by their glue-like covering, can act upon them and produce an acid which dissolves the tooth structure.

*Are all teeth equally liable to caries?*

No. Those which have been soundly built out of the best of materials and which are nourished by food that has plenty of the necessary elements in it are usually able to resist this disease.

*Should carious temporary teeth be filled?*

Yes. It is most important to have every cavity filled promptly.

*What happens if the cavities in the deciduous teeth are not filled?*

The tooth aches.

The pulp (nerve) dies.

An abscess forms at the end of the root.

The tooth becomes useless for chewing food.

The child's health is endangered.

The full development of the jaw is checked.

The shedding of the diseased roots is interfered with.

Eruption of the permanent teeth is disturbed.

Irregularity of the permanent teeth often results.

*Is toothache serious?*

Yes, it is a warning that there is a very large cavity, that the pulp is about to die, or that the tooth is already abscessed.

*Why is an abscessed tooth dangerous to the health?*

Because infection from the abscess often gets into the blood stream and is carried to other parts of the body, where the bacteria locate and cause disease in tissues that are not high in vitality.

*Should hopelessly diseased teeth be kept in the mouth?*

No. It is better to have them extracted and prevent the possibility of injury to the general health.

*Do cavities furnish a growing place for bacteria?*

Yes, especially for the bacteria of pneumonia, measles, scarlet fever and diphtheria.

*What effect have carious teeth upon the digestion of food?*

No child with broken down teeth can chew its food thoroughly. Unmasticated food cannot be well digested and assimilated, so the child suffers for want of proper nourishment, and also has digestive disturbances.

*Does food crowding between the teeth do any harm?*

It injures the gums and is apt to cause cavities to form.

*Do green, black or yellow stains on the teeth mean anything?*

Yes. The teeth are not being kept clean and are roughened so that they are liable to decay when the stains form.

*Does thumb or finger sucking harm the teeth?*

Yes. Both cause misplacement of the teeth and produce facial deformity.

*Does mouth breathing affect the teeth?*

It causes a narrowing of the jaws and irregularity of the teeth.

*Should a baby be allowed to suck a pacifier?*

No. It causes a flattening of the front of the mouth.

*Why are irregular teeth undesirable?*

They cannot function properly.

They are difficult to keep clean.

They are more liable to disease.

They are ugly.

*How can the dentist help to keep the child's deciduous teeth?*

By careful examination at least every six months.

By teaching the child how to brush the teeth and impressing it with the importance of thorough daily care.

By giving the teeth prophylactic treatments (preventive cleaning) at regular intervals. (From one to three months apart.)

By putting protecting fillings or medicines on tooth surfaces that seem likely to decay.

By placing restorative fillings in cavities.

By encouraging the child to eat the right foods.

*Of what help are rest and sleep in keeping the teeth well?*

They are necessary for the normal functioning of the body. Neither the body nor the mind is free from the harmful effects of lack of rest and sleep, and the health of the teeth and their supporting tissues suffers with the rest of the body.

*Is fresh air necessary to the health of the dental structure?*

Yes. It purifies the blood and supplies it with oxygen. This is just as necessary to the dental structures as it is to any other part of the body.

*What effect does happy play have on the health of children's teeth?*

It has a good effect that cannot be disregarded. Happy thoughts which the child has while at play are just as important to its well-being as food or any other essential to right living.