

# Teething and Biting and Breastfeeding

## *What happens if your baby bites you while breastfeeding?*

**Most babies will get their first tooth when they are four to seven months old.** However, some babies will get teeth earlier or later than this time period. Babies often exhibit certain behavior while “teething” if their gums are sore and swollen. They may drool, bite or gnaw on toys or fingers, have disrupted sleep or be irritable. Other babies will get teeth without any symptoms at all.

## **What can you do to help your baby be more comfortable during teething?**

Offer your baby something cold to chew on, such as a wet washcloth or a cold teething toy.

## **What should you do if your baby should bite you while nursing?**

- It is possible for a baby to accidentally bite you while breastfeeding, especially at the end of a feeding. It is a natural reaction for a mom to startle and quickly pull baby off the breast. This may discourage a baby from biting again. However, a sensitive baby may react by refusing the breast if they are startled, which will then lead to a nursing “strike.”
- If your baby should attempt to bite more than once, try to stay calm. Instead, pull baby close to you while nursing, keep your hand close to your baby’s mouth and pay attention. When baby’s suckling slows, you may want to take baby off the breast. A baby cannot bite while actively suckling.
- If your baby should start to bite down, you can **gently** pinch your baby’s nose closed. This will cause your baby to come off the breast on his or her own because it will block your baby’s airway.
- If your baby should bite down and **you notice a small cut or wound on your nipple**, you may apply an antibiotic ointment to your nipple after breastfeeding. Nipples generally heal very quickly and it should not hurt to nurse if baby is latched deeply. If it should hurt, you may want to pump for a day or two until you are well healed and give this milk to baby in a cup.

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