

How to Survive Your Puppy's Teething Process

At this age, your puppy will start losing baby teeth and grownup teeth will begin to erupt. In the process, no surface is off limits for his robust teething. He'll chew your furniture, shoes and anything else in his reach. Here's what you need to know about your puppy's teething.

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Baby, or deciduous, teeth typically come in at 3 weeks of age in puppies
- By 3.5 months, your puppy will start to lose some baby teeth and adult teeth will begin to erupt; the entire teething process is typically complete at around 6 months of age, and longer for some puppies
- During this time, and often lasting through the first year of life, your puppy may try to chew on anything he can get his mouth on, including your shoes and furniture; take care to remove objects that your puppy could choke on and provide plenty of safe options for chewing
- Try putting your puppy's silicone chew toy in the freezer; the cold can help relieve teething pain. You can also offer frozen treats, such as blueberries or small pieces of carrots
- During teething, get your pup used to having his mouth gently touched as part of his daily routine; it's the first step to regular brushing

All puppies go through a teething process, just like human babies. Baby, or deciduous, teeth typically come in at 3 weeks of age in puppies, which is when they transition from their mother's milk to solid food. By the time your puppy is 6 weeks to 8 weeks old, all of her baby teeth will be in — 28 to be exact.¹

By 3.5 months, your puppy will start to lose some baby teeth. They'll become loose first and then fall out. The roots will be absorbed into the gums and the adult teeth will erupt. Large dogs typically get their adult teeth sooner than smaller dogs.

The entire process is typically complete at around 6 months of age, at which point your dog will have 42 teeth.² However, many puppies have a strong desire to chew the entire first year of life, so providing a variety of nontoxic and satisfying toys is imperative during this time.

While you may find an occasional puppy tooth on the floor, your dog will probably swallow most of its baby teeth after they fall out.³

How to Help Your Teething Puppy

Dogs are chewers by nature. One way they explore the world is using their mouths — and this is especially true of puppies. Along with mouthing items just to explore how they feel and taste, puppies often chew to alleviate itching and pain caused by teething.

How will you know your puppy is teething? You can assume that if your puppy is younger than 6 months, she's somewhere in the teething process. However, you may notice your pup drooling or chewing even more than usual, or see a small spot of blood on a toy he's been chewing on.⁴

During this time, your puppy may try to chew on anything he can get his mouth on, including your shoes and furniture. Take care to remove objects that your puppy could choke on, such as rocks or sticks, and provide plenty of safe options for chewing. A variety of different textures and densities allows your puppy to choose what type of surface they're desiring, along the teething process.

Soft, natural chews made from healthfully sourced beef and bison tendons are usually satisfying, as are rubber food-dispensing toys that can be stuffed with pureed veggies, including pumpkin puree, plain yogurt/kefir or raw food and then frozen, for an extra-soothing chew session. You can also offer frozen fresh food treats, such as blueberries or small pieces of carrots⁵ (just never onions, grapes or raisins).

Avoid soft plastic toys with squeezers (they are full of endocrine disrupting chemicals) any toys with a chemical smell or bright colors, along with those that contain fire retardants or stain guards. Synthetic chews made of nylon or flavored plastic could also contain questionable ingredients that your dog is better off not ingesting, as are **traditional raw hides**.

There are many brands of toys made out of 100% natural rubber, organic cotton, hemp or other eco-friendly and contaminant-free materials. Any chew toy you offer should be large enough that your pet cannot ingest it. And inspect it regularly to be sure no parts have broken off and always supervise your puppy while chewing.

Teach Your Puppy About Nipping

Puppy teeth are sharp, as you'll quickly find out if your puppy tries to make a chew toy out of your hand or foot. Play biting is also common during this stage, but it's important to set boundaries early on. If your pup bites you too hard, loudly say, "Ouch!"

Then, offer him a suitable object to bite or chew. If he doesn't respond and keeps trying to nip at you, walk away for a brief time so your puppy learns his behavior won't be rewarded. Do not "play" with your puppy by letting him chew on or mouth your hands — while this may seem cute now, it can lead to problems when he's grown.

You can also redirect your puppy's energy to another activity, like a walk. You can also offer a puzzle toy to entice your teething pup — they provide mental stimulation while your dog works for their food.

Start Getting Your Puppy Used to Teeth Brushing

As soon as your puppy has his adult teeth, you'll want to begin regular **teeth brushing**. However, you can start the process even earlier by getting your pup used to having his mouth gently touched as part of his daily routine.

When your puppy is sleepy, or you're having a cuddly, quiet moment, start with a face/gum massage with your hand, then gradually move on to touching his teeth. Once your puppy is used to you putting fingers under her lips and giving her a gum massage, she'll thinking nothing of it later on when you want to brush her teeth or examine her mouth.

Once your pup is completely comfortable with you gently massaging their upper and lower gums and teeth, wrap a bit of gauze around your finger and lightly rub it over your dog's teeth and gums. The next step is a finger brush and then a pet toothbrush that's the right size for his mouth.

By the time you get to the toothbrush step, your dog's adult teeth should be in and, if you've been practicing daily, he should be receptive to brushing. An enzymatic tooth solution designed for pets can also be used to help break down the plaque and tartar on the surface of your dog's teeth.

Keep an Eye on Your Puppy's Mouth

If your puppy is trying to chew on everything in sight, remind yourself that the teething process doesn't last forever. But take advantage of this time to offer your puppy a rotation of appropriate and safe objects for chewing while discouraging inappropriate chewing behaviors. Also make a point to massage your puppy's mouth and gums daily, and introduce gentle, daily brushing when the adult teeth come in.

Keep a close eye on your puppy's mouth throughout the teething process as well. While most baby teeth fall out on their own, occasionally some may be left behind, leading to pain and dental problems. "If you find that some don't fall out, be sure to tell your veterinarian. They may need to be removed by a veterinary professional," Dr. Jerry Klein, AKC chief veterinary officer, explains.⁶

Sources and References

^{1, 2, 5} [PetMD February 7, 2023](#)

^{3, 4, 6} [AKC, January 1, 2022](#)
