



## Teething: What Puppy Parents Need to Know

Puppies are highly entertaining, they're also high-maintenance! Caring for tiny dogs as they develop two sets of teeth requires preparation and patience.

Some puppies get through teething with hardly any fuss. It really takes a bite out of others. But with thoughtful care and lots of attention, you can minimize your fur baby's discomfort and help ensure the healthy teeth that are crucial to a dog's wellbeing.

### Teething timeline

Teething begins at about four weeks old, which, not surprisingly, is also when weaning begins. Pup's first set of 28 temporary "milk teeth" come in over the next few weeks and remain for about six months. You'll know when they start to fall out because you'll find them everywhere! The process is slower in small dogs than large ones, but by around eight months, most dogs have 42 adult teeth, give or take a tooth.

### Chew on this

Teething puppies want to chew—all the time—on everything! Direct that impulse toward puppy appropriate toys made of soft rubber or twisted cotton rope. (The AKC sells a *Puppy Teething Pack* on its website.) For a homemade puppy pacifier, freeze a washcloth soaked in low sodium chicken broth. The result might be messy but feels oh, so good on puppy's sore gums.

### Nip that nipping

Gently teach your puppy that it's never okay to bite a human with a loud, high pitched "Ouch!" Always have one of his toys ready to trade for your hand, and remember to praise him for chewing the right thing.

### Involve your veterinarian

Whether human or canine, teething is painful. Whining, drooling, reluctance to eat, bad breath, low fever and even a little blood are all to be expected. Dog breeds with flat faces, such as the Pug and Maltese, are prone to dental problems. During routine visits, your veterinarian will check for issues like overbite, underbite and crowded teeth that may need to be pulled.

With understanding and the right supplies, you'll guide your pup through the challenges of teething with a smile!

