Teeth



This information text tells you about the different kinds of teeth that humans have at different stages of life.

Human beings have two sets of teeth in their lifetime – the primary dentition and the secondary dentition.

The Baby Teeth

The first set of 20 teeth are known as the baby, primary, deciduous or 'milk' teeth. They are called deciduous because they fall out (like leaves on a deciduous tree) to make room for the permanent teeth.

The milk teeth start to show through the gums when you are about six months old and start to fall out when you are about six years old.

The Adult Teeth

The second set of 32 teeth are known as the permanent or adult teeth. They are called permanent because, if you look after them properly, they stay with you permanently throughout your life.

The permanent teeth start to emerge when you are about six years old and have generally all emerged, apart from the wisdom teeth, by the age of about 12. Wisdom teeth appear between the ages of 17–21, although not everyone gets them.

Incisors

The incisors are the shovel-shaped teeth at the front of the mouth.

They are used for biting and cutting food.

Canines

The canine teeth – also known as 'eye teeth' – are more pointed and are found next to the incisors.

Canines are used for tearing and ripping food.

Premolars and Molars

The premolars and molars are also known as 'cheek teeth'. They have a large flat surface, are bigger and stronger than the front teeth and have more than one root. Young children don't have premolars, they just have molars behind the canines.

Premolars and molars are used for chewing, crushing and grinding the food.

Abridged from 'Different kinds of teeth'
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