

Science on Teeth

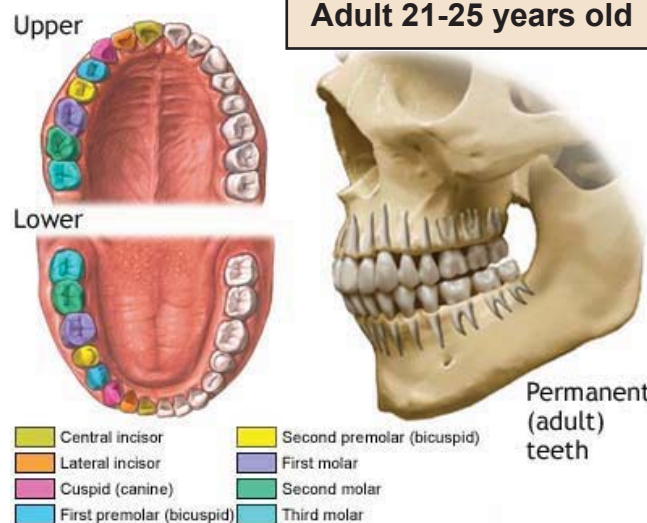
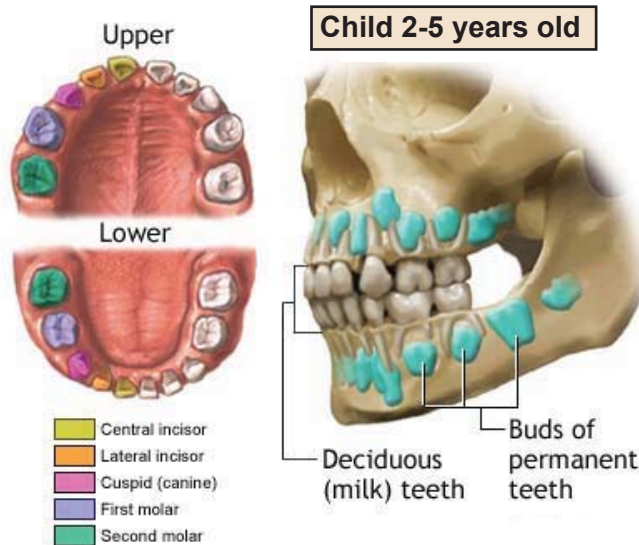
Teeth are small whitish structures made of tissues of varying density and hardness. They are not bones.

Teeth are found in many vertebrates. They use teeth for chewing, tearing and scraping food and for milking.

Humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) are mammals. Teeth are among the most distinctive and long-lasting features of mammal species. The shapes of the teeth are related to its diet. Herbivores have many molars for chewing plant matters which are hard to digest. On the other hand canines are prominent in carnivores to kill and tear meat.

Some animals develop only one set of teeth for the life time (monophyodont). We (mammals) have two sets of teeth (diphyodont). There are animals that have many sets of teeth during their lifetime (polyphyodont).

Sharks grow a new set of teeth every two weeks to replace worn teeth. Rodents are nibblers, therefore their incisors wear away continually through nibbling. Their incisors grow and maintain relative constant length.



We have 20 milk teeth (primary, deciduous, or baby teeth) and 32 permanent teeth. Milk (primary) teeth begin to form between the sixth and eighth weeks *in utero*, and permanent teeth start to form in the twentieth week *in utero*. The first set of teeth (milk teeth) appears at about six months of age but in some babies one or more visible teeth can be seen at their

birth. They are known as neonatal teeth. Eruption of the primary teeth is known as “teething” and this can be painful to the body.

All primary teeth are replaced by permanent teeth except for molars. There are 08 molars in the milk teeth and they are replaced by 08 permanent premolars.

A survey reveals that 90% of the school population

is subjected to oral diseases. Therefore, oral hygiene is very important in many ways. Oral hygiene refers to the practice of keeping the mouth clean and it is a means of preventing dental caries (“tooth decay”/dental cavities), periodontal diseases, bad breath, and other dental disorders.

Source: *Internet*

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Milk teeth and permanent teeth: Number and location

Teeth	Milk Teeth		Permanent teeth	
	(Upper) Maxila	(Lower) Mandible	(Upper) Maxila	(Lower) Mandible
Incisors	4	4	4	4
Caniners	2	3	2	2
Premolar	-	-	4	4
Molar	4	4	6	6
TOTAL	10	10	16	16
	20		32	