



Your Sitter's incredible growth and development

Smile! It's baby's first tooth

It's the moment you've waited for—your baby's first tooth! Expect to see that first breakthrough around 6 to 9 months, though the timing can vary. The 2 front teeth, either upper or lower, are typically the first to appear and are followed by the other front teeth. Next, expect the upper canines or eye teeth, then the molars will make their appearance. Teething may occasionally cause irritability, crying, drooling and a low-grade fever. To help relieve your little one's teething woes, try these tips:

- Wash your hands and massage their gums with one of your fingers.
- Let them chew on a cold teething ring. Be sure it's a hard, safe material.
- If your child gets a fever above 101°F while teething or a lower fever persists, check with your pediatrician.

The evolving sense of taste

By the time you were 8 weeks pregnant, your baby already had taste buds. Their first tastes, in the womb, came from amniotic fluid, which was flavored by whatever you ate that day. That's why your baby is born having been exposed to sweet, salty, sour and bitter flavors., though they prefer sweet. However, their likes aren't set in stone. You can influence what they enjoy by sharing new foods with them, again and again. In fact, if you're breastfeeding your baby has been enjoying new flavors in your breastmilk all along.

At about 5 or 6 months, your baby can appreciate and be interested in new flavors, so try to offer a variety as often as you can. That being said, be sure to wait about 3 days in between introducing new foods to check for sensitivities. Babies can become used to foods tasting a certain way. So, if you add sugar or salt to their food, they start preferring it that way, which may cause health problems later in life. Still, taste is much more than sweet, salty, bitter or sour. As your baby tries new foods, they'll naturally be learning about these other things that influence how food tastes:

Temperature: Milk from the fridge tastes different than body-temperature milk.

Texture: While right now, all of your baby's food is soft, eventually they will recognize crispiness, crunchiness, and creaminess.

What it looks like: Just like us, babies eat with their eyes, so introduce lots of developmentally appropriate colorful foods to your little one.

Motor skills

Around this time, your baby begins reaching for and holding objects—this is an

important part of fine motor development. Your Sitter is learning how to rake objects into their palm using their fingers. Soon, your little one will be picking up objects with their entire hand. Watch what you leave within their reach, because it may go straight to their mouth! You can help her by:

- Placing objects within reach: As your baby's hand-eye coordination improves, so will their ability to grasp the object they are reaching for.
- Choosing toys that stimulate their senses of sight, touch, or hearing. Toys that make sound encourage the development of manipulation skills and coordination. Your little one is also learning cause and effect—if they squeeze a toy, it will squeak.

At this stage, your baby is developing the large motor skills necessary for sitting independently, and eventually for crawling and walking as well. Give them the chance to practice new physical feats by providing plenty of playtime and a safe space to roll around. Help them explore some of these strength-building activities:

- Roll over in both directions.
- Stand on your lap and bounce.
- Sit in “tripod”—leaning forward to balance their upper body.
- Rock on their stomach, kick her legs, and “swim” with their arms.