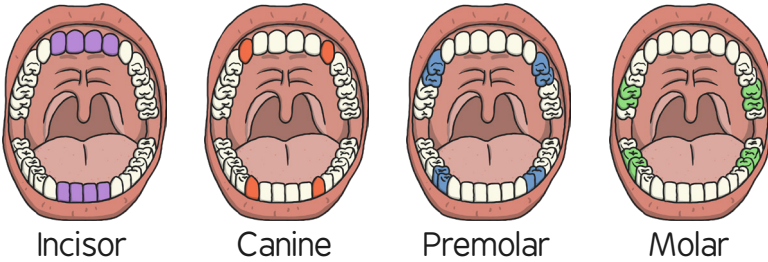


Adult Guidance

Types and Functions of Teeth

Types of Teeth: Answers for IWB



Milk Teeth Versus Adult Teeth

While this lesson focuses on adult teeth you may be asked questions about milk teeth.

The key differences between them are:

1. Milk teeth are temporary while adult teeth are permanent.
2. There are 20 milk teeth altogether – in each quarter there is two incisors, one canine and two molars. There are between 28 and 32 adult teeth. In each quarter there are two incisors, one canine, two premolars and two molars and in some cases one wisdom tooth.
3. Milk teeth start to appear when a baby is around 6 months and fall out around 6 years old. Your permanent teeth start to emerge from the age of 6 and are generally all emerged by the age of 12. Wisdom teeth on the other hand tend to grow between the ages of 17 – 21 are called wisdom teeth simply because they emerge when you are older and supposedly wiser!

Herbivores, Carnivore and Omnivore Teeth

Herbivores

Most species of herbivores have incisors, premolars and/or molars but tend to lack canine teeth although there are notable exceptions to this including horses, hippos and giant panda to name a few. Herbivores who lack canines usually have a gap between their front teeth and cheek teeth called a diastema. Human diastema is usually what is referred to as gap tooth – where there is a gap between the front two incisors.

Carnivores

Carnivores have a mixture of the different types of teeth ranging from crocodiles who only have canine teeth to lions and dogs which have all the same types of teeth that humans. However, some species have a modified type of pre-molars called a carnassial teeth. This is the 4th pre-molar in the set of teeth and used to crush up hard materials such as bones.

Omnivores

Like carnivores, some omnivores use their teeth to help catch their prey. Rodents in particular are known for their long incisor teeth which grow continuously. They can use these to chew through difficult materials such as husks or wood to obtain well-protected or difficult to obtain food.

Diet affects the types of teeth an animal has and when/how they grow. It is important that children understand that while there are 'typical' types of teeth for herbivores, carnivores and omnivores, there is still great variation within these groupings.