



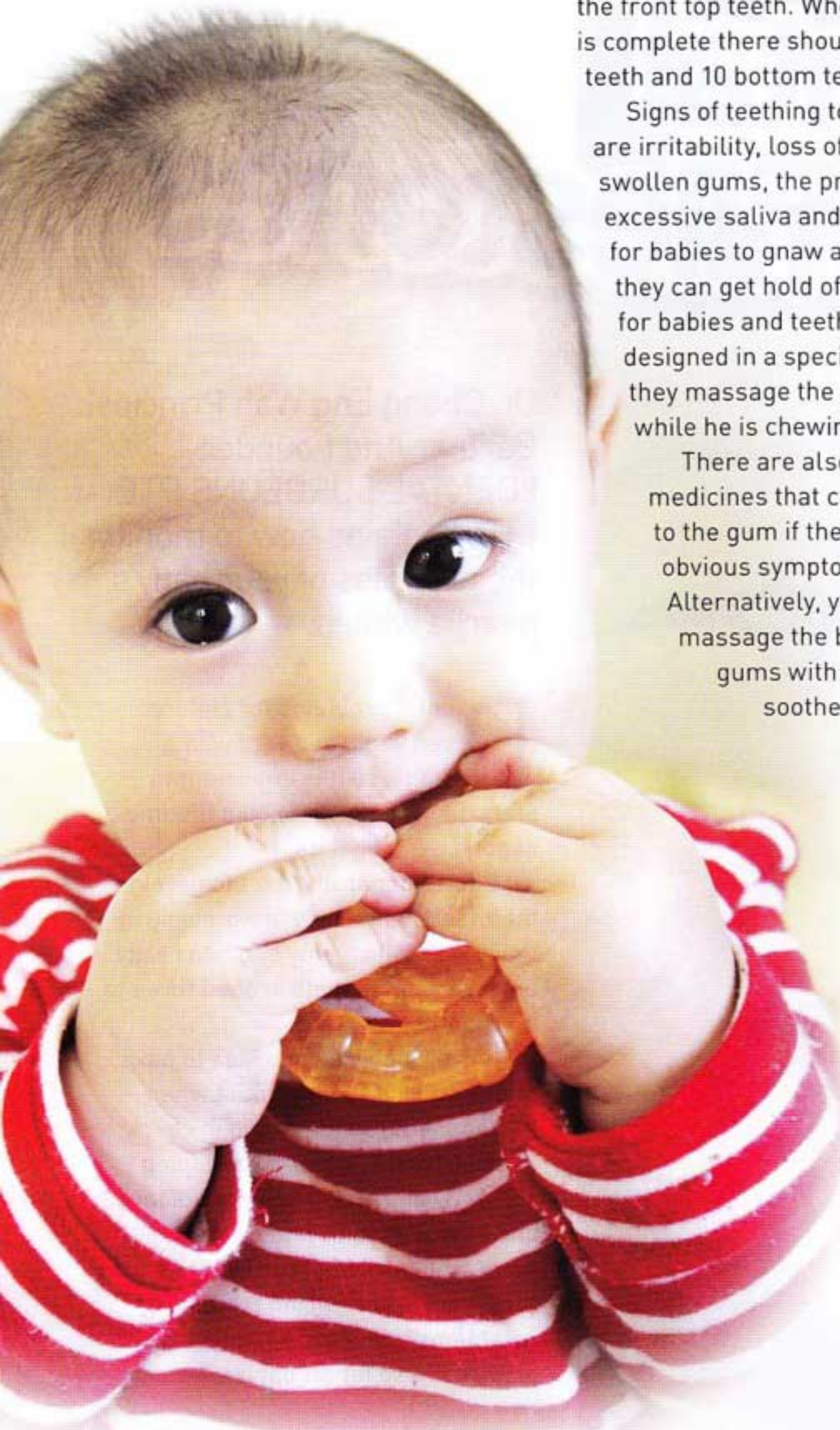
Dental milestones

Dr. Cheng Eng Wah Principal Partner And Founder, I.DENTAL SURGEONS PTE LTD, explains how to monitor the progress of your baby's pearly whites.

Dental problems for children can begin at a very young stage, so it is important to start them really early on a lifetime of good dental habits.

Babies generally start to develop their teeth when they are growing in the womb, which only begin to really emerge as milk teeth around three to six months.

It is probably a good idea to have their first visit to the dentist when this happens, so that you can check to see if their teeth are developing correctly and also get some guidance and advice as to how to care for them, and also what to expect as they start experiencing teething "problems", which is a natural growth phase for all babies.



Teething problems

Teething most often begins around six months with the full set of teeth appearing by the age of three years. Usually the bottom front teeth will appear first, shortly followed by the front top teeth. When teething is complete there should be 10 top teeth and 10 bottom teeth.

Signs of teething to look out for are irritability, loss of appetite, swollen gums, the production of excessive saliva and the tendency for babies to gnaw at everything they can get hold of. Certain toys for babies and teething rings are designed in a special way that they massage the baby's gums, while he is chewing them.

There are also certain medicines that can be applied to the gum if there are obvious symptoms of pain. Alternatively, you can also massage the baby's soft gums with your finger to soothe the pain.

Starting good oral habits

Getting babies used to having their mouths cleaned even before their teeth emerge is generally a good practice. This can be done during bath time by wrapping a clean gauze or soft wet washcloth over your index finger and gently rubbing it in circular motions over the gums. This will get your baby used to having his mouth cleaned as part of his daily routine and should make it easier to transition into tooth brushing later on.

When the teeth start to gradually appear, you can start using brushes that have very small heads and soft bristles specially designed for babies. The easiest way to brush a baby's teeth is to sit him or her on your knee with the head resting against your chest, and brush the teeth in small circles, covering all surfaces of the teeth.

Make it a fun experience with your baby to distract him from the initial discomfort and this will get them used to teeth brushing as part of their everyday routine. You can also set a good example by letting them watch you brush your teeth.

Certain toys for babies and teething rings are designed in a special way that they massage the baby's gums, while he is chewing them.

Potential problems

Tooth decay in babies can lead to pain, infection, malnutrition and premature loss of teeth, all of which can affect the development of permanent teeth.

It is important to note that tooth decay can begin as soon as the first baby tooth appears and is caused by diet and intake of liquids. Fruit juice, breast milk, cow's milk formula all contain sugar content which if not cleaned properly will impact the baby's teeth. So the types of food, how often they are eaten and how long the food stays on the teeth and in the mouth are all factors that affect the teeth's health.

Be particularly aware that the sugars in formula milk that babies take to bed in a bottle can stay on their teeth and cause decay, likewise when your child is in the habit of wanting to sip from a bottle during the day. So if you need to give them a bottle to drink from on their own outside regular meal times, make sure that it only contains water.

Thereafter ...

It is important to continue good hygiene practices into their toddler years to establish positive lifelong good oral health habits.

Learning how to brush their own teeth should start any time around two years of age, as something to do with mummy or daddy who should hold their hands and take them through the motions, as they would not have the dexterity to do it on their own. Making it a fun experience would make the whole exercise more appealing and something they may in fact look forward to doing.

Regular visits to the dentist should also be introduced at an early age, so that they get familiar with

it and not grow to associate it as a scary and unpleasant experience as they grow older.

Sugary drinks and snacks are two of the biggest culprits of tooth decay in young children. Try and limit this to special treats and replace sugary food such as chocolates and sweets with fruits, vegetables and dairy snacks. The better it is for your child, the better it is for the teeth, and remember to always accompany the food with a good cleaning routine. **LWB**

Curious kids need to be tough inside!

Friso Gold
NEW Advanced Formula

with **Dual System** has Prebiotics and Probiotics to help fight against harmful bacteria and thereby maintain a healthy digestive system for your child.

For Toddlers 1 to 3 years

Friso gold
growing up milk

Friso
growing up milk

Friso

Pacify or not?

While many parents tend to use pacifiers to keep their toddlers quiet, they should really be weaned off using it once the baby teeth have fully grown in. This is because they can sometimes cause irregularities in speech, and can contribute to tooth decay if not cleaned properly.

