



What are teeth?

We have teeth because they help us to eat things. Our teeth are the hardest material in the human body and they cut, tear, crush and grind our food.

Our first teeth begin to grow when we are around 6 months old. The front teeth often appear first — we call our first set of teeth our ‘milk teeth’.

Adult teeth begin to grow when we are around 6 years old — after our other teeth have fallen out.



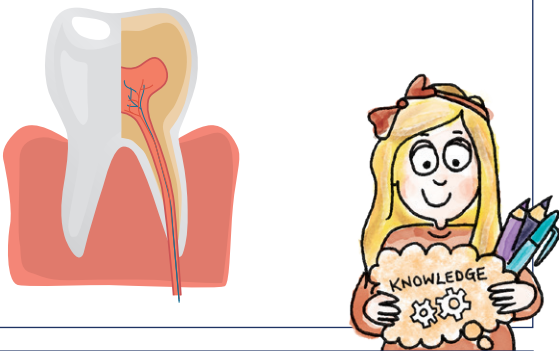
What are animal teeth like?

Animal teeth are different depending on whether an animal is a carnivore, herbivore or omnivore. This is because different types of teeth help you to eat different types of food.



What are our teeth made from?

Our teeth are made of pulp, dentine and enamel. The enamel is the white, outside layer of the tooth. The dentine is the soft, more yellow layer underneath and the pulp is where the nerves are found. The part of the tooth above the surface is the crown and the part found in the gum is the root.



What can happen to our teeth?

If we do not look after our teeth then they can become damaged or they can even fall out. We only have one set of adult teeth and so if we lose them, they will not grow back!

Food and bacteria can build up on our teeth if we do not clean them properly. We call this plaque. The bacteria in the plaque attacks our teeth — causing them to rot and turn black.



Types of Teeth			
Incisors	Canines	Premolars	Molars
The incisors at the front of the mouth have a sharp biting surface and are used for cutting or shearing food into small chewable pieces.	The canines are on either side of the incisors. They have a sharp, pointed biting surface. Their function is to grip and tear food.	The premolars are towards the back of the mouth. Unlike incisors and canines, premolars have a flat biting surface. Their function is to tear and crush food.	The molars are at the back of the mouth. They are the largest of the teeth and have a large flat biting surface. The function of the molars is to chew, crush and grind food.

Glossary		
1	Teeth	A set of hard structures found in the mouth for chewing and biting.
2	Incisor	Type of tooth shaped for cutting.
3	Canine	Type of tooth shaped for gripping and tearing.
4	Premolar	Type of tooth shaped for crushing, tearing and grinding.
5	Molar	Type of tooth shaped for crushing, chewing and grinding.
6	Milk Teeth	A name sometimes given to the first set of human teeth.
7	Decay	When something begins to rot away.
8	Enamel	The hard white coating on the outside of our teeth.
9	Dentine	The softer, more yellow layer of our teeth found under the enamel.
10	Pulp	The softest inner part of our teeth where the nerves are found.
11	Plaque	A build-up of food, sugar and bacteria on our teeth.
12	Digestive System	The system our body has for turning food into energy.
13	Oesophagus	A long tube from our mouth to our stomach.
14	Liver	An organ which produces bile.
15	Stomach	An organ which is part of the digestive system.
16	Intestine	Includes the small and large intestines.
17	Gall Bladder	Stores bile from the liver.
18	Pancreas	A gland found behind the stomach – it helps with digestion.
19	Rectum	The final section of the large intestine.
20	Anus	Where waste food leaves our body.

What journey does our food take through our digestive system?

Once food has been chewed and swallowed, it travels down the oesophagus and enters the stomach. The stomach breaks down our food. From the stomach, the food travels into the small intestine, where our body absorbs what it needs. Then the food travels onto the large intestine. The rectum and anus get rid of the food our bodies did not use.

What do some of our digestive organs look like?			
Stomach	Liver	Small Intestine	Large Intestine
Food stays here for around four hours. Here the food is broken down into smaller pieces mixed into a paste. The acid in our stomach kills a lot of bad bacteria that could make us sick.	Food does not pass through or into our liver but the liver plays an important role in our digestive system. The liver produces bile which helps break up fat into smaller pieces.	In the small intestine, food is mixed with juices from the liver and pancreas. After this, the food is absorbed from the small intestine and around our body through our blood.	The last stage of the digestive system. Here, any of the food that our body cannot use or does not need is stored until it makes its way out of our body as waste.

What happens when we eat?

When we eat, our food enters our digestive system. The human digestive system includes many different organs that process our food — turning it into something our bodies can use and getting rid of what our bodies cannot use. Without our digestive system, our bodies would not function and we would have no energy.

