



Patient Education:

Ectopic Eruption of Teeth, Pediatric

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Ectopic Eruption of Teeth, Pediatric

An ectopic eruption is when a child's adult (*permanent*) tooth comes in (*erupts*) at an abnormal position. The permanent tooth may grow in front of or behind the child's baby (*primary*) teeth. The permanent tooth may also get stuck underneath a primary tooth and grow in crooked.

Permanent teeth often erupt behind the front primary teeth (*incisors*). Usually this does not need treatment. Other types of ectopic eruptions may need treatment to prevent other tooth problems from developing.

CAUSES

Any condition that changes the normal spacing between primary teeth can cause an ectopic eruption. Most cases are caused by abnormal timing of when primary teeth come out and permanent teeth come in, such as:

- Losing primary teeth too early. This can change the spacing in your child's mouth.
- Losing primary teeth too late. This can block the path of the permanent tooth.

Other causes may include:

- Not having the normal number of primary teeth. This may change the spacing in the mouth.
- Having more permanent teeth than normal (*hyperdontia*).
- Having a small mouth. This may mean there is not enough space for all of the teeth.
- Having a mouth or jaw injury.

RISK FACTORS

This condition is more likely to develop in:

- Children who have a family history of ectopic eruption.
- Children who are 6–13 years old.
- Children who have a history of cleft lip or palate.

SYMPTOMS

Ectopic tooth eruption may not cause any symptoms. If symptoms do occur, they can include:

- Sharp pain when biting down on food.
- Constant pain or pressure.
- Sensitivity to hot or cold foods.
- Swelling of the gums.
- Upper and lower teeth that do not line up (*malocclusion*).
- Teeth that are crowded or crooked.
- Trouble chewing.

DIAGNOSIS

Your child's dental care provider may discover ectopic eruption during a routine dental exam. Dental X-rays may show a permanent tooth that is out of alignment before it comes in. Your child may also have other tests, including:

- Additional X-rays.
- Photographs of the face.
- Plaster models of the teeth (*impressions*).

TREATMENT

Treatment for this condition depends on the position and stage of the tooth eruption. Early treatment can prevent future problems. The goal of treatment is to make more space for permanent teeth to grow. Treatment may include:

- Pulling primary teeth (*extraction*).
- Wearing an orthodontic appliance. These include space maintainers, retainers, or braces.
- Oral surgery to uncover an erupting tooth.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Make sure your child brushes his or her teeth twice a day.
- Keep all follow-up visits as directed by your child's health care provider. This is important.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child has new pain or your child's pain gets worse.
- Your child has trouble chewing.
- Your child has new symptoms.
- Your child's symptoms get worse.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.

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