

Pediatric Dental Group of Colorado



Signs and Symptoms of Shark Teeth

The most obvious sign of shark teeth in kids is the presence of a double row of teeth in the front of the mouth. However, there may be other signs as well, including:

- Double row of teeth
- Potential discomfort or pain in the gums or teeth
- Difficulty with normal tooth eruption of permanent teeth

How Common Are Shark Teeth in Kids?

The exact prevalence of shark teeth in children is unknown, but estimates suggest it occurs in up to 3% of children. This means it's a relatively common occurrence and shouldn't be a cause for immediate alarm.

When to Worry About Shark Teeth

There are instances when a "shark tooth" is a good reason for a dental visit. Think about three things ... time, place, and discomfort.

1. Time: If the baby tooth doesn't get wiggly and simply won't budge within two months, it may be time for a wiggle appointment so we can help that little guy along. Even then, if your child's other teeth have been stubborn about coming loose in the past, this one might just follow suit.

2. Place: Are your child's shark teeth coming in behind the molars? This might cause crowding issues, and if your kiddo hasn't seen an orthodontist yet, now might be the time. Speak to your dentist about the possibility of an ortho consultation.

3. Discomfort: If a shark tooth is causing your child pain or discomfort beyond just the normal "it hurts when it wiggles," it's a good idea to give us a call. Whether we can give advice on foods that often help this wiggly tooth along (apples! apples! apples!), over-the-counter pain medications to help with pain and inflammation, or simply set up an appointment to look ourselves, we're happy to help when it comes to our patients and their discomforts.

The extra teeth can make it more difficult to clean them effectively, increasing the risk of cavities and gum disease.

How to Fix Shark Teeth in Children

The best course of treatment for shark teeth in children will depend on the individual child's situation. Here are two main approaches:

1. Waiting it out: In some cases, particularly when the baby teeth are loose and wiggly, it may be best to wait for them to fall out naturally simply. Once the baby teeth are gone, the permanent teeth may erupt into their proper positions without intervention.

2. Professional dental intervention: A dentist may recommend professional intervention if the baby's teeth are not loose, the extra teeth are causing problems, or permanent teeth appear impacted. This could involve:

- **Tooth extraction:** In some cases, the dentist may recommend removing the extra teeth to create space for the permanent teeth to erupt properly.
- **Orthodontic evaluation:** If the shark teeth are causing misalignment or there's a concern about future crowding, a dentist may recommend an orthodontic evaluation. An orthodontist can assess the situation and determine if braces or other orthodontic treatments are necessary to achieve proper tooth alignment.

Home Care Tips While Waiting for an Appointment

Even if you're waiting for a dental appointment to address your child's shark teeth, there are some things you can do at home to promote good oral health:

1. Maintain a consistent brushing and flossing routine:

Brushing twice daily and flossing once daily is crucial for removing plaque and bacteria, even around the extra teeth. Make sure to use a soft-bristled toothbrush and age-appropriate toothpaste.

2. Encourage gentle manipulation of loose baby teeth:

If they are somewhat loose, gently wiggle them with a clean finger to help them fall out naturally.

3. Monitor for any signs of discomfort:

Pay attention to your child's behavior and be mindful of any discomfort or pain they might experience.

When Should You Call the Dentist?

That's a great question, and the real answer is "any time you are concerned about your child's dental health." Really! We're glad you're playing an active role in caring for your kid's teeth, and we're happy to answer your questions and schedule an appointment if necessary!

Furthermore, here are some specific situations that warrant a call to the dentist:

- The baby's teeth are not loose, and the child is over eight years old.
- The extra teeth are causing discomfort or pain.
- There are signs of difficulty eating or speaking.
- Permanent teeth appear impacted or unable to erupt.
- If you have any concerns about your child's oral health.

Final Takeaway

Shark teeth, while slightly alarming at first glance, are a relatively common occurrence in children. By understanding the causes, signs, and treatment options, you can feel empowered to make informed decisions about your child's oral health. Remember, early intervention is key to preventing complications.

If you have any concerns about your child's shark teeth, don't hesitate to schedule an appointment with the friendly and experienced pediatric dentists.