Teeth Glossary

**alveolus:** a socket in the jawbone that the root of a tooth is anchored to through the periodontal ligament

**apex:** the bottom point of a tooth’s root

**bicuspids:** located behind the canines
The bicuspids are flat with prominent cusps that grind and mash food. Adults generally have eight bicuspids.

**canines:** located on either side of the incisors
The name comes from their similarity to dogs’ fangs. Adults have four canines. They are used to tear food.

**cementum:** is the outer layer of the tooth below the gums
Like dentin, cementum is similar to bone and attaches the tooth to the jawbone.

**crown:** the portion of the tooth that is visible above the gum line

**cusps:** ridges on top of the crown that are used for grinding and chewing

**deciduous teeth:** also known as baby teeth, or milk teeth
These are the first set of teeth that human beings have.

**dentin:** is the layer beneath a tooth’s enamel
Similar to bone, but stronger, dentin is a hard, mineral material that protects the pulp in the center of the tooth.

**enamel:** forms the outer layer of the tooth and protects the tooth from bacteria and temperature change
Enamel is the hardest substance in the human body.

**incisors:** located at the front of the mouth
Adults have eight incisors. These teeth have a straight, sharp edges and are used to cut food.

**molars:** located behind the bicuspids
Most adults have twelve molars; they are used for the most forceful chewing. There are three kinds of molars: first, second, and third molars. Third molars are also known as wisdom teeth.

**periodontal ligament:** attaches the cementum of a tooth to the alveolus

**permanent teeth:** the 32 teeth that replace baby teeth

**pulp:** the center of the tooth
This area consists of blood vessels that bring oxygen and nutrients to the tooth, as well as nerves that signal pain and temperature to the brain.

**root:** the portion of the tooth below the gum line

**wisdom teeth:** also known as third molars
These teeth were developed thousands of years ago when human diets required extra chewing. Wisdom teeth are often removed because they crowd other teeth and are no longer needed for chewing.
### Fun Facts about Teeth

- Humans and most other mammals have two sets of teeth—deciduous, or baby teeth, and permanent teeth.
- Mammals are heterodonts—their teeth are different shapes and sizes and are used for different purposes.
- Fish and reptiles are generally homodonts—their teeth are all the same shape and size.
- Enamel, the outer layer of human teeth, is the hardest substance in the human body.
- Humans have 20 deciduous teeth and 32 permanent teeth.
- Humans have four types of teeth: the incisors cut, the canines tear, and the bicuspids and molars grind food.
- George Washington’s dentures were not made of wood. His dentures consisted of some of his own teeth, cattle teeth, hippopotamus bone, and elephant ivory.
- In 700 B.C. the Etruscans made false teeth out of ivory and bone.
- Human canine teeth are the smallest canines of any mammal.
- Teeth are so resistant to deterioration that, of the human organs, they are the most frequent type of fossilized remains to be found by paleontologists and anthropologists.
- Teeth provide the structure to the muscles in the face and help form the smile.
- The teeth, the lips, and the tongue work together to control the mouth so it can form words.
- Baby teeth erupt once the enamel around them has completely formed.
Show What You Know

Label the diagram of the tooth with the words from the vocabulary list below. Write the word in the blank space provided, and draw an arrow to the correct area on the tooth. Arrange the list so that vocabulary words identifying the upper areas of the tooth are on top of the list and those identifying the lower area of the tooth are toward the bottom of the list.

- cementum
- cusps
- root
- enamel
- crown
- pulp cavity
- dentin
- apex

Label the diagram of the mouth with the words from the vocabulary list below. Write each word in the blank space provided, and draw an arrow to the correct area in the mouth.

- central incisors
- canines
- first molar
- third molar
- lateral incisors
- bicusps
- second molar
Dental Word Scramble

1. NRISSOCI
2. ASNNCEI
3. PAEX
4. OORT
5. DTLRPENAIO TALNMGIE
6. LOEASUVL
7. MAENEL
8. MOWDIS EETHT
9. DEDUOCISU EHTET
10. TDNEIN
11. MAPNNEERT ETHTE
12. LPUP
13. SCPUS
14. CISBIDSPU
15. LASRMO
16. OCNWR
17. UTEMMMCNE
Dental Crossword Puzzle

Across
1. This area consists of blood vessels that bring oxygen and nutrients to the tooth
5. Located behind the canines
8. The name of these teeth comes from their similarity to dogs’ fangs
11. Portion of the tooth that is visible above the gum line
12. These teeth are used for the most forceful chewing
14. Attaches the cementum of a tooth to the alveolus
15. Also known as third molars
16. A socket in the jawbone through which the root of a tooth is anchored

Down
2. The 32 teeth that replace baby teeth
3. The layer beneath a tooth’s enamel
4. Ridges on top of the crown that are used for grinding and chewing
6. These teeth have a straight, sharp edge and are used to cut food
7. Also known as baby teeth, or milk teeth
9. Forms the outer layer of the tooth and protects it from bacteria and temperature change
10. The portion of the tooth below the gum line
13. Outer layer of the tooth below the gum
16. Bottom point of a tooth’s root
Answer Key

Dental Word Scramble

1. incisor
2. canines
3. apex
4. root
5. peridontal ligament
6. alveolus
7. enamel
8. wisdom teeth
9. deciduous teeth
10. dentin
11. permanent teeth
12. pulp
13. cusps
14. bicusps
15. molars
16. crown
17. cementum

Dental Crossword Puzzle