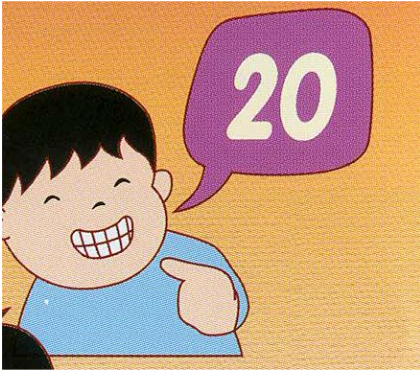


## Two sets of teeth in a lifetime

### Two sets of teeth in a lifetime

Deciduous teeth:

They are the first set of teeth we have and there are altogether 20 of them. They usually start to erupt from around the age of six months until 3 years of age.



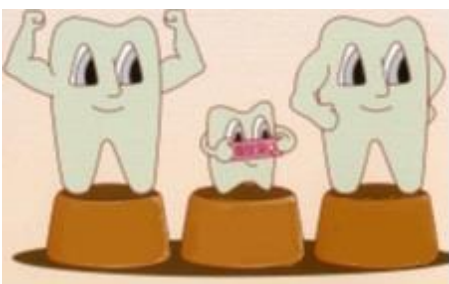
Permanent teeth:

At the age of 6, they sequentially erupt to replace the deciduous teeth which become loose and shed.



### Deciduous teeth: Space retainer for permanent teeth

- Normally, underneath the root of each deciduous tooth, there is a developing permanent successor tooth.
- When it is time for the permanent successor tooth to erupt, the root of the deciduous tooth will resorb and the deciduous tooth will become loose. The place is then taken up by its permanent successor tooth.
- Deciduous tooth retains the space for its permanent successor tooth.

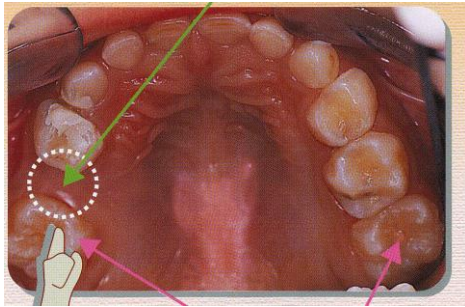


## No tooth is dispensable

If the deciduous tooth, especially the second deciduous molar, is lost early due to tooth decay, the consequences can be serious:

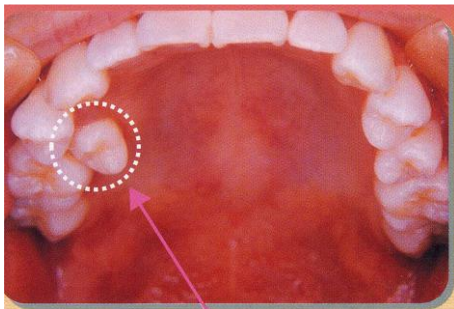
- Poor alignment of the teeth

The second deciduous molar is already lost



The first permanent molar

Since the first permanent molar erupts behind the second deciduous molar at the age of 6, the space of the lost second deciduous molar will gradually close up as the first permanent molar moves forward.



The permanent tooth is crowded out of the arch when it erupts

Later, when the second permanent premolar erupts to replace the second deciduous molar, the permanent tooth will either be crowded out of the dental arch or be impacted and is unable to erupt, leading to poor alignment of the teeth.

- Malocclusion
- Difficult to clean

It is difficult to clean the crowded area. Dental plaque bacteria and food debris will easily accumulate between the crowded teeth, increasing the chance of gum inflammation and tooth decay.

- Surgical removal may be required if the permanent tooth cannot erupt.

## **Don't remove the deciduous incisors (front teeth)**



Some parents thought that the lower deciduous incisors might obstruct the eruption of the permanent incisors and had the deciduous incisors removed:

Consequently, the front part of the lower jaw will resorb because of the premature loss of deciduous incisors, leading to a space loss in the dental arch. As a result, there may be inadequate space for the permanent incisors to erupt and align properly in the arch.

## **Protect the deciduous teeth with your children**

The deciduous teeth shoulder such an important mission, parents should teach their children to protect their teeth carefully.

- Brush the teeth thoroughly with fluoride toothpaste day and night.
- Reduce frequency of food and drink intake to lower the risk of getting tooth decay.
- Have dental check-up every year.

If you have tooth decay, you should have dental treatment at early stage. The deciduous teeth can be kept to retain the space for its permanent successor tooth to prevent the migration of neighbouring teeth into its place resulting in malalignment of permanent teeth.

