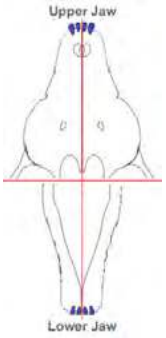
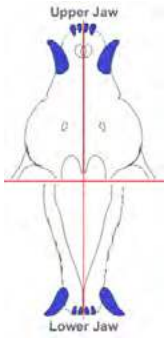
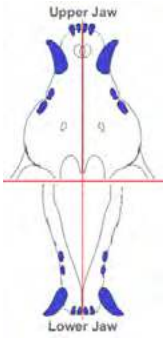
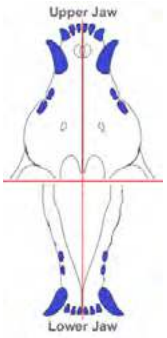
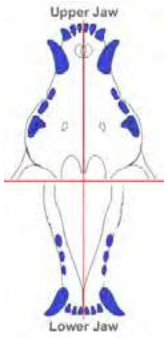
Aging Puppies by Teeth

Puppy teeth grow in, or *erupt*, and then are replaced by permanent teeth on a fairly consistent schedule. This makes it relatively easy to tell a puppy's age by the number, locations, and types of teeth it has.

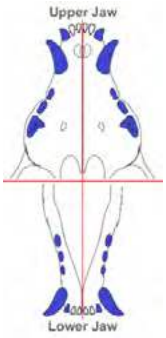
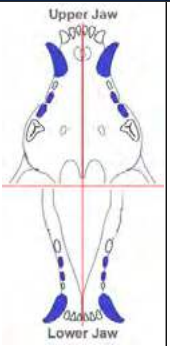
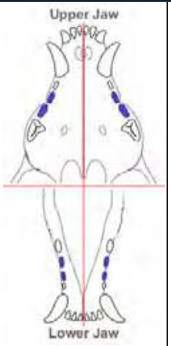
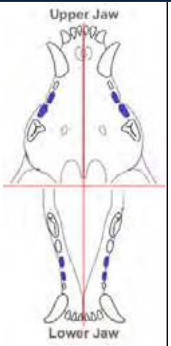
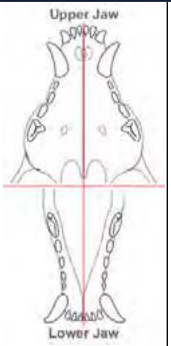
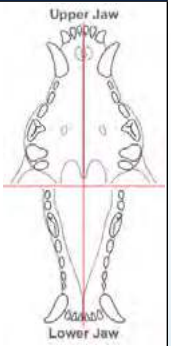
Deciduous "Puppy" Teeth

A puppy's deciduous teeth (which fall out) are much smaller, thinner, and sharper than the permanent ones that replace them. Generally, all 28 of a puppy's deciduous teeth will erupt by about 8 weeks of age. This diagram shows when and where puppy teeth typically arrive:

Age	2-3 weeks	3-4 weeks	4-6 weeks	5-6 weeks	6-8 weeks
Location					
Type (Puppy)	First Incisors	Canines	First Premolars	Last Incisors	Last Premolars
Total	8	12	20	24	28 (all)

Permanent "Adult" Teeth

Adult teeth are not as sharp, but they are larger in both width and length than their deciduous predecessors. A dog usually has its full set of adult teeth (42 total) by 7 or 8 months of age. The full set includes four total premolars, four upper molars, and six lower molars that were absent in the deciduous set. This diagram shows when and where adult teeth (white) appear and replace puppy teeth (blue):

Age	2-4 months	4-5 months	5 months	5-6 months	6 months	6-8 months
Location						
Type (Adult)	First Incisors	Last Incisors 1st & 4th Premolars	Canines	First Molars (Lower)	Middle Premolars	Last Molars
Total Puppy	20	12	8	8	0	0
Total Adult	8	20	24	26	34	42 (all)

PRACTICAL TIP

A puppy with less than 28 puppy teeth and no adult teeth is likely to be under 8 weeks old. A dog that still has puppy premolars and only the first bottom molars is likely to be under 6 months old.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sometimes puppy teeth do not fall out as the permanent teeth grow in. This is most common in canine teeth, but any puppy tooth can be "retained." Retained puppy teeth can crowd the adult teeth and more easily trap food particles, leading to rapid tartar buildup and inflammation of the gums (gingivitis). Ask your veterinarian if your dog's retained puppy teeth should be removed to prevent early dental disease.

Puppy canine tooth retained behind adult tooth

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