

## When You're Missing Permanent Teeth

A human adult mouth should have 32 teeth. Because many adults have had their "wisdom" teeth removed, they may have only 28 teeth if no other teeth have been lost. Most of the time, all adult (or permanent) teeth, barring the wisdom teeth, have long been visible by the time a person is 21 years old.



But some people don't develop all of their permanent teeth. They may be born with a condition that causes them to have fewer adult teeth.

### Caused by Genes

Having six or fewer permanent teeth missing is called hypodontia. This is a birth defect caused by abnormal changes in the genes. Having more than six permanent teeth missing is known as oligodontia.

### Early Action for Kids

Your child's dentist can monitor his or her oral development and check for missing permanent teeth. Generally, you should take your child to the dentist soon after the first baby tooth erupts, and no later than the child's first birthday.

### Treatment Options

Fortunately, there are effective ways to treat missing teeth. Dentures, crowns, and bridges can fill in the spaces left by missing teeth. Dental implants are another option for adults with healthy gums and jawbones. Implants are placed below the gums in your jawbone. Unlike dentures, implants fuse to the bone and act as a base for replacement teeth.

"Tooth Eruption: The Primary Teeth" American Dental Association.

[http://www.ada.org/sections/scienceAndResearch/pdfs/patient\\_56.pdf](http://www.ada.org/sections/scienceAndResearch/pdfs/patient_56.pdf) Accessed 2013.

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