

Tooth Numbers: What's the Deal With That?

As you're in the dentist's chair, in between small talk about your children and what you did over the summer, you hear mumbling between Dr. Holtzman and Theresa that sounds like a combination of lottery numbers.

What's that all about? Is this your lucky day, or does it mean you need some dental work?

Well, you can certainly memorize those numbers and try your luck, but it's definitely about your teeth. In fact, some dentists frequently refer to teeth by their numbers, even when they're speaking directly to you.

If you happen to need a referral to another dentist for a special procedure, by the way, the specialist and [Dr. Holtzman](#) will most likely talk numbers too.

And, if you have tooth pain, it might be easier to tell the dentist or hygienist the number rather than pointing.

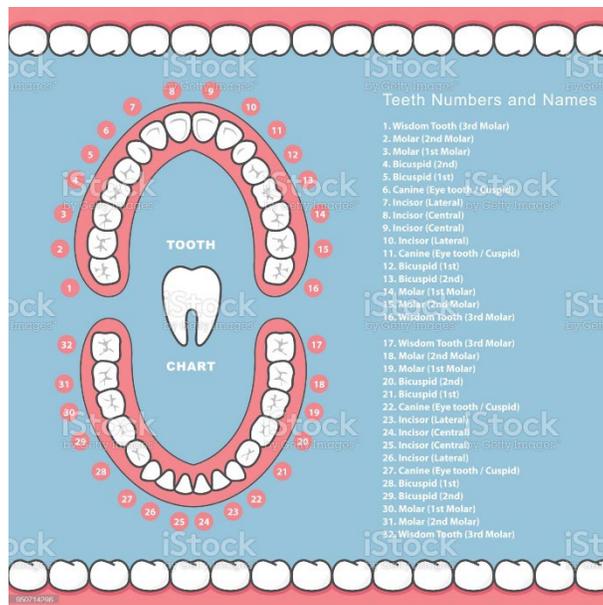
Add it all up, and it would be wise to remember the numbers of your teeth. So let us count 'em up for you.

Understanding the Tooth Number Chart

While it may sound like a calculus equation as the dentist is examining your mouth, the tooth numbers are rather simple.

Start at the top right. Tooth number 1 is the one at the back. The one beside it toward the front of your mouth is 2, and the numbering continues along the upper teeth until you get to the other end. So, tooth number 16 is the farthest back on the top left.

Then, drop to the lower left, and the tooth essentially under 16 is 17. Keep counting across the bottom until you reach the other end. The tooth at the back of the lower right is 32.



What If You Have Wisdom Teeth?

Adults won't have all 32 teeth if they had wisdom teeth removed. Because they are the farthest back on all four quadrants of your mouth, those tooth numbers would be 1 at the top right, 16 at the top left, 17 at the bottom left, and 32 at the bottom right.

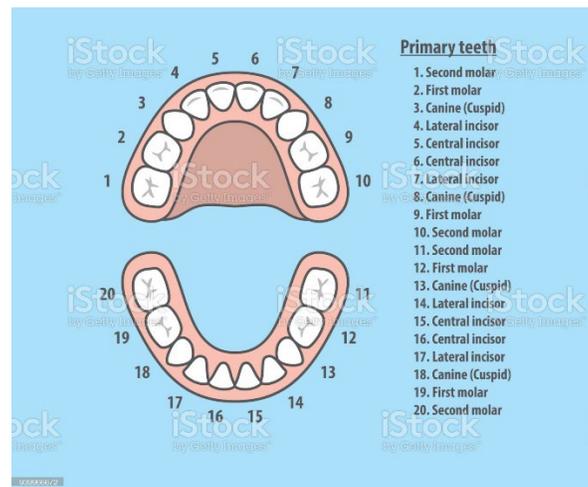
What about Children's Teeth?

[While adults have 32 teeth, children only have 20](#), and a different tooth chart may be used altogether.

For children, some dentists use the alphabet. (It's a teaching opportunity for toddlers, and we love singing along!) The same concept applies, just with letters instead of numbers.

Start at the back right at the top with the letter A. Follow along the top until you get to the last tooth at the other end, which is J if all the teeth have erupted. Drop to the lower jaw and start at the back left with K, and follow that along until you end with T at the back right.

Others use numbers, but only count up to 20, naturally.



See? Understanding the tooth number chart is easy as ABC 123! If you have any questions, here's our number: 313-882-1490.