



# Why humans have different types of teeth

**KS2 SCIENCE** Ages 9-12 🕒 3 min read

## Why do we need different teeth?

If all your teeth were the same shape and size, eating would be really difficult! Your mouth is like a **kitchen with different tools** — you wouldn't cut bread with a spoon, and you wouldn't stir soup with a knife. Each type of tooth has a special job to do.

You have four main types of teeth: **incisors**, **canines**, **premolars**, and **molars**. Working together, they help you bite, tear, and crush your food into small pieces so your body can digest it properly.

### Incisors: the cutters

At the front of your mouth are your **incisors** — you have eight of them. These teeth are sharp and flat, perfect for biting into food like apples, carrots, or bread. Think of them as your mouth's scissors.

Think of it like scissors cutting through paper — incisors slice through food cleanly and quickly.

### Canines: the rippers

Next to your incisors are your **canines** — you have **four** of them. These are pointy and stick out a bit. They're brilliant at tearing meat and tough foods. Animals like wolves and lions have much bigger canines because they eat lots of meat!

Think of it like a knife tearing through chicken — canines grip and pull apart chewy foods.

### Premolars and molars: the crushers

At the back of your mouth are your **premolars** and **molars** — these are bigger and flatter on top. You have **eight premolars** and **twelve molars** (including your wisdom teeth, which grow later). These teeth are like little hammers, crushing and grinding food into tiny pieces.

Think of it like a pestle and mortar crushing nuts into powder — molars break down hard, tough food into small bits.

## **All working together**

Your teeth work as a team. When you eat an apple, your incisors bite it, your canines help hold it, and your molars crush it into small chunks. This teamwork makes eating easier and helps your **digestive system** break down food more efficiently. Different animals have different teeth depending on what they eat — herbivores have huge molars, while carnivores have huge canines. Your teeth tell the story of what humans are meant to eat!