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Health Alerts

Baby teething gels not recommended

Parents should not use medicated gels to treat teething pain in young children because the ingredient lidocaine used in some products can be harmful, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Infants can be harmed if they accidentally have too much lidocaine or swallow too much of the drug. Reactions can include seizures, brain injury, heart problems and death.

The FDA reviewed 22 reports of serious reactions, including deaths, in infants and young children 5 months to 3.5 years of age who were given oral lidocaine 2% solution for the treatment of mouth pain, including teething, or who had accidentally swallowed

the solution.

The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend putting any prescription or over-the-counter pain relievers or medications that contain lidocaine or benzocaine on babies' gums. These products are not useful for teething pain because they wash out of the baby's mouth in minutes.

Instead, caregivers can give their baby a teething ring that has been chilled in the refrigerator, which will dull pain. Frozen teething rings are not recommended because they can be too hard on gums. Caregivers also can gently rub or massage the child's gums.

— *Jennifer Ball*