



Northern New England

Poison Center

1-800-222-1222

Information & Advice 24/7 www.nnepc.org

IS IT SAFE TO USE ORAJEL OR ANBESOL FOR TEETHING?

May 23, 2018 by Colin

The FDA has [strengthened its warnings](#) about [benzocaine](#), a medication used to numb pain that is included in some over-the-counter teething products. Though it's rare, **swallowing benzocaine** can cause a **dangerous condition** called methemoglobinemia, in which not enough oxygen is carried in the blood.

The latest FDA warning states that [benzocaine](#) products should not be used in children younger than 2 years. It also calls on manufacturers to stop marketing benzocaine products for teething and to add a warning about methemoglobinemia to the product label.

What are some ways that you can relieve your child's teething pain, without using numbing medications like Orajel or Anbesol?

- Gently massage your child's gums.
- Give your child something firm and cool to chew on. Make sure it is clean, and large enough that they can't choke on it, and supervise them closely. Some possibilities are a chilled teething ring or pacifier; a cool, wet washcloth; a chilled cucumber or carrot; or hard, unsweetened teething crackers. Avoid using frozen items. They may be too hard or uncomfortably cold.
- Comfort and distract your child. Sing a favorite song, read a book, rock your child, or gently message them. Breastfeeding can also help.
- If your child is in a lot of discomfort, your doctor may recommend giving them some over-the-counter pain-relieving medicine, such as [acetaminophen](#) (Tylenol) or [ibuprofen](#) (Motrin or Advil). Always check with your child's doctor before giving medication, and carefully follow the directions on the product label.



If you have given your child an over-the-counter medication that contains benzocaine, or if you have question about the risk of using these products, call the poison center at **1-800-222-1222** [chat online](#) or **text POISON to 85511**.

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