

What the mould?

Water play and teether toys; know better, choose better.



It's what's on the inside that counts.

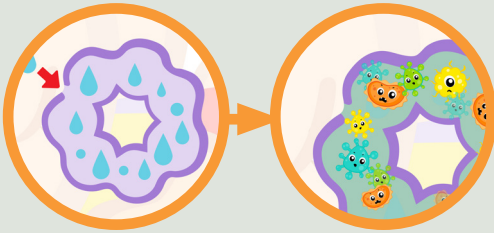
Teething is a normal stage of every baby's development, often accompanied by discomfort and excessive drooling. Teether toys can offer effective pain relief through counterpressure and gentle gum massage, and as such are an essential 'go to' for many parents.

To make teethers fun and engaging for baby, many toy manufacturers incorporate a squeaker feature, requiring air to be drawn inside the toy through a hole, to create the 'squeak' sound.

Water play toys too often include a hole as a play feature, encouraging baby or parents to draw water into the toy and squirt it out again.

What many parents do not realize however, is that these holes allow for moisture, such as bath water or baby's drool, to become trapped inside the toy. The damp, warm environment inside the toy provides ideal conditions for the **formation and growth of bacteria and fungi**, which can exist unnoticed and hidden from view.

All the meanwhile baby continues to **chew on these toys**, or spray the contents of the water play toys **into their face or mouth!**



What is mould and what are the risks?

We know mould looks yucky, but is it unsafe?

Mould produces microscopic spores that can be easily inhaled or ingested, to which the immune system responds by creating allergic reactions as a natural defense. While people respond in different ways to mould exposure, babies and young children whose immune systems have not yet fully developed, are particularly vulnerable to its negative effects.

In 2017 researchers with the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology, ETH Zurich, and the University of Illinois studied the types of organisms present in bath toys. Their findings were shocking!

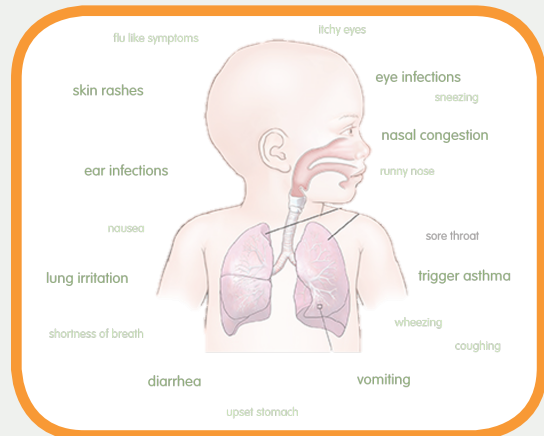
Although undetectable from the outside, dense growths of black yeast and fungus were detected on the inner surface of 4 out of 5 of the toys tested. A staggering 80% tested positive for "potentially pathogenic bacteria", linked to hospital acquired infections.

A dissected squeaker teether reveals hidden mould flourishing inside



Black mould spores

Common reactions to mould exposure



Is there a solution?

There is no reliable method of effectively cleaning inside water play toys and teethers, in fact many manufacturers recommend against submerging squeaker teethers in water at all. In either case, how would you check that you've done the job well without cutting the toy open?

That's exactly what pediatric dentist, Dr. Dana Chianese did in 2017, after parents around the world reported making the shocking discovery of mould inside their baby's popular squeaker teether.

In a Good Housekeeping article on this same topic, Dr. Chianese stated that while she recommends teething toys to parents every single day,

"I no longer buy any chew toys with a hole or recommend to any of my patients."

The recommendation of Dr Chianese and scientific researchers from the 2017 bath toy study is unanimous. To eliminate risk to baby, the safest and most simple solution is to use fully sealed teether and water play toys.