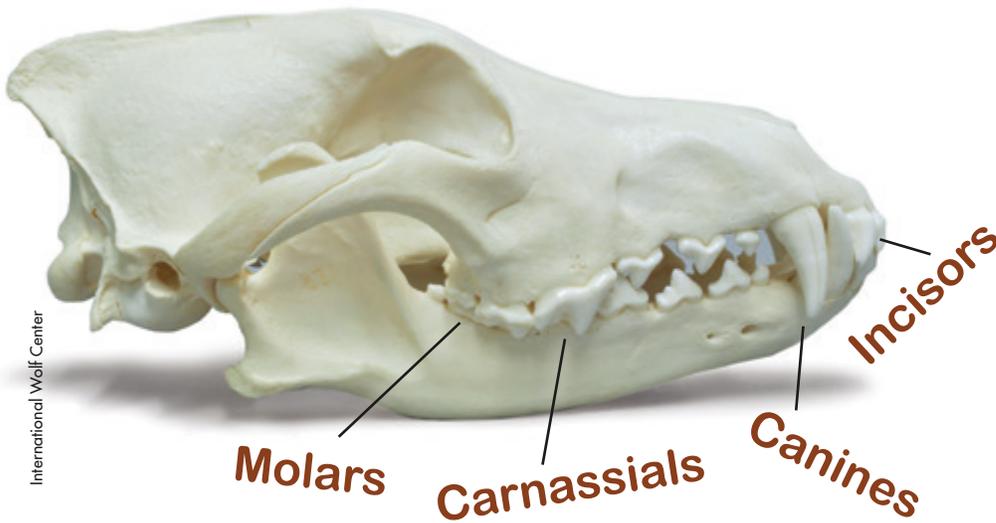




What big teeth you have!

The teeth and jaws of adult gray wolves are well suited to their diet and hunting methods. Over 90 percent of gray wolves' diet is meat, so they must hunt live prey or eat from a carcass. Adult gray wolves have 42 teeth. Adult humans have only 32. Wolves have several types of teeth that serve different purposes while hunting or eating. These teeth include incisors, canines, carnassial and molars.

Incisors are in the front of the mouth. They are mostly used for biting off small pieces of meat. Canine teeth can be 2.5 inches long, with half the tooth rooted in the jawbone. They are used to puncture and grip their prey. Carnassial teeth are further back in the mouth. The top carnassial teeth hang slightly over the bottom carnassials. This allows them to glide past the bottom teeth in a scissor-like motion. They are extremely sharp so they can shear meat away from bones. Molars are used for grinding and crushing meat.



Adult gray wolves have an impressive set of teeth, and their jaws are incredibly strong. A human's bite force is only about 120 pounds per square inch, and a large domestic dog's is about 320 pounds per square inch—but the bite force of a wolf is almost 400 pounds of pressure per square inch! This allows them to bite through a bone to get to the marrow.

Meet the Pack:

Denali and his littermate, Aidan, came to the International Wolf Center in 2008. They are 11 years old, which makes them the oldest wolves in the Exhibit Pack. Denali is also the largest wolf the Center has ever had; he weighs close to 146 pounds! Denali is the Northwestern subspecies of gray wolf, one of the larger subspecies in North America.

International Wolf Center

Vocabulary

Climate The weather conditions in a specific area, or over a long period of time

Carnivore An animal that eats mostly meat

Canine Tooth A type of tooth that is used for puncturing, gripping and tearing meat

Ungulate An animal that has hooves

Denali



Notes from the Field

The climate of northeastern Minnesota can bring extremely cold temperatures and snow, but, like their wild counterparts, the wolves at the International Wolf Center have no problem dealing with it. Gray wolves have double-layered fur coats and large feet that help them live in many different climates. ■

Cris Cross

Across

- 2 A group of wolves that live and hunt together
- 4 The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism
- 6 A wolf that lives in Arizona, New Mexico and Northern Mexico (leave spaces between the three words)
- 7 The weather conditions in a specific area or over a long period of time

Down

- 1 Type of tooth that is used for puncturing, gripping and tearing meat
- 3 An animal that eats mostly meat
- 5 An animal that has hooves
- 8 Used to punture, rip and chew meat

Crossword Answers

1. Canine 2. Pack 3. Carnivore 4. Habitat 5. Ungulate 6. Mexican Gray Wolf 7. Climate 8. Teeth