

Tips for Breastfeeding Twins

When you learn you are having twins you may experience a range of emotions: from joy to worry. Suddenly many of your expectations, plans, and former decisions are changed. Your decision to breastfeed, however, does not have to change. Human milk is especially important for twins, who are often small at birth and need all the health benefits of human milk. Breastfeeding helps you create that special and necessary bond with both babies. Many mothers have nursed their twins with wonderful results; you can enjoy nurturing your babies in this special way, too!

Getting Started

- General Information about how to breastfeed (or preparing to breastfeed) can be found in LLLC Information Sheets #456, #457, #469 and #481.



- Nursing early and often right after birth is the best way to get a good start breastfeeding. However, if you or your babies have a health problem or they need to be separated from you, this does not mean you have to give up the idea of breastfeeding.
- If it is necessary to express your milk because one or both babies cannot nurse, colostrum can be collected most effectively using hand expression. If you need to continue expressing, a full-size automatic electric pump will stimulate regular milk production. You should plan on pumping both breasts every two to three hours during the day and at least once during the night.
- Milk supply is regulated by the amount of sucking (or pumping) that stimulates the breasts. That's why mothers of twins almost always produce enough milk for both babies.

Coordinating Nursings

- Many mothers find that their twins want or need to breastfeed one at a time for some feedings. Once the twins are at home and effectively sucking, it may become easier to nurse the babies together. Use pillows to support the babies so your hands are free to help each one latch on correctly.
- In the first few weeks, it's a good idea to switch babies from one side to the other at alternate feedings. For example, Baby A takes the left breast at 7 am and Baby B takes the right

breast. At the next feeding, Baby B takes the left breast and Baby A takes the right breast.

Night Nursings

Night nursings will be easier if you can learn to nurse lying down. Mothers have found different positions that work well, depending on the size of their babies, their breasts and the length of their arms. You can nurse your babies one at a time or together, while reclining, lying nearly flat on your back, or lying on your side. For ideas about positioning, you can look at the pictures here, in breastfeeding books or call a La Leche League Leader.

Mothering the Mother

- Above all, a mother of twins needs to take good care of herself, eating well-balanced meals and drinking to thirst. Get as much rest as possible by sleeping whenever the babies sleep. Even if they do not nap at the same time, at least sit down and rest as often as possible. Accept all offers of help with meals, laundry, and older siblings.
- Enjoy this special time when you can nourish and nurture two little human beings at once!

Ambivalent Feelings

Before, during, and after birth, some mothers of twins have mixed emotions about their "double blessings." Unfortunately, they are often isolated from others because of bedrest or fatigue, or their negative feelings are not understood by those around them. These feelings are a normal reaction to a very stressful situation and should not be ignored or discounted. It often helps to talk to another mother of twins.

Finding Support

Tell friends and family members about practical and helpful ways to be involved. Pass along the information on the reverse side of this sheet so they can help and encourage you during this incredible time in your life!

For more information on breastfeeding twins, you can call La Leche League Canada at 1-800-665-4324 for a referral to a La Leche League Canada Leader in her area. Visit our web site at www.LLCC.ca.

**For breastfeeding support contact:
1-800-665-4324 or**



La Leche League Canada

www.LLCC.ca

Help!

An Open Letter To Spouses, Friends & Relatives of Mothers of Twins

Mothers of twins need extra help. Many find that their biggest challenges are getting enough food and rest. Mothers of twins also have unique challenges holding, carrying and going out



Breastfeed while resting

with more than one baby. They may feel isolated, resentful or nervous. The help and support of friends, relatives, and spouses might mean the difference between making it and falling apart. Many times people want to help, but they don't know what to do. Friends or family members

who try to help can actually make things worse. Here is a short list of tips for anyone who wants to help a mother of twins.

What you can do

- Bring food when you visit.
- Change the babies.
- Give her a back rub or a foot massage while she nurses the babies.
- Bring her water or juice.
- Watch the babies while she sleeps.
- If a baby needs to nurse in the middle of the night, change him, then bring him to the mother while she is in bed. When the next baby wakes up switch them.
- Watch the babies while she takes a 15 minute walk or a bubble bath.
- Listen if she is feeling scared, tired, or overwhelmed.
- Hold her if she needs to cry.
- Do laundry, fold the clothes, and put them away in the dresser.
- Go grocery shopping for her.
- Prepare lunch or dinner and serve it to her.
- Tell her you love her.
- Bring over current magazines, catalogues, or DVDs.
- Help her find another mother of twins to talk to.
- Clean up the kitchen, do dishes, vacuum, pick up.
- Tell her what a good job she's doing with her babies.

Other things to keep in mind

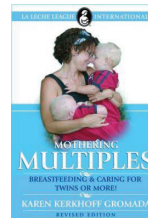
- When you visit, help the mother feel relaxed; don't expect to be entertained.
- She needs support and encouragement; don't give advice

when she complains or seems tired.

- The mother may be feeling vulnerable; do not undermine her confidence by asking negative questions like "Are you sure those babies are getting enough to eat?" or "Why aren't they sleeping through the night yet?"
- Concentrate on "mothering the mother" and helping with household chores rather than trying to take over the care of the babies.
- A mother of twins needs extra help at least throughout the first year; don't disappear after three months.

What if there is no help?

If the mother of twins is living far away from family and friends, or they are working during the day, hiring a mother's helper may be the answer. Even if the cost is high, the mother's physical and emotional well-being are worth it. Some mothers have hired high school students to help after school. Some churches or community groups provide volunteer mother's helpers for mothers of twins. Mothers of twins will find support for breastfeeding and mothering at La Leche League meetings.



Helpful Reading: Mothering Multiples: Breastfeeding and Caring for Twins or More!

Revised edition • By Karen Kerkhoff
Gromada

Mothering Multiples covers all aspects of caring for multiple babies including possible complications of pregnancy, preparing for a multiple birth, coping with newborns who might need to spend time in a NICU, establishing a milk supply for multiple babies, adjusting as a couple, and caring for toddler multiples. This book is a La Leche League bestseller. The author also provides current information on her website at www.karengromada.com.

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