



Breastfeeding ... twins, triplets and more

It is possible to breastfeed two, three or more babies! Many sets of twins have been successfully breastfed beyond their first birthdays.

This information sheet answers some common questions about breastfeeding “multiples” – more than one baby.

Why is it important that I breastfeed my babies?

Breastmilk is ideal for all babies. It is even more important for premature or small babies who are more likely to get infections.

Your breastmilk is exactly what your babies need. Your milk is the best food for their special needs and it can protect them from infections.

Breastfeeding can also be very satisfying and rewarding for you.

There are many people who can answer questions and help you with breastfeeding more than one baby.

Some choices are:

-  a Lactation Consultant
-  your Doctor or Midwife
-  a Public Health Nurse
-  La Leche League
-  a Dietitian
-  a support group for parents of “multiples”, (call your local public health unit)



How can I make breastfeeding a success?

1. Prepare to breastfeed

- When you first find that you are having more than one baby, arrange for help during your stay in the hospital and at home. You will need help with older children, housework and shopping, etc.
- Make a plan that meets your goals for breastfeeding as well as the needs of your family.
- Women who are pregnant with more than one baby often deliver early. If your babies are premature, read the information sheet “Breastfeeding your premature baby”.

2. Know where to get support

- Talk to your doctor or midwife to learn what support is available to breastfeeding women in your community. Ask about prenatal classes, where to buy or rent a breast pump and professional help (such as support from a lactation consultant). Contact a support group for parents of multiples, such as Multiple Births Canada at www.multiplebirthscanada.org
- Find information and support from websites such as La Leche League International at www.llli.org/NB/NBmultiples

3. Get started early

- Place your babies “skin-to-skin” right after birth or as soon as possible. This helps your babies adjust to life outside the womb and increases your milk supply.
- Stimulate your breasts soon after birth. Within 6 hours, put your babies to breast or express your breasts by hand or with a pump.

Tips:

- Get help quickly if you run into any breastfeeding problems. With multiples, problems can get worse fast.
- Set up an area or two for breastfeeding . Stock the spot with snacks and drinks for mom plus some diapers and extra baby clothes.
- If you are working on producing more milk, breastfeed or pump at least 8 times in 24 hours. Don't skip the night feeds or pump sessions. Your hormone levels are higher at night. Night feeds or pumps can be important to keep your milk supply up.
- Get some help. Find those who will support you and your breastfeeding plan. If your family and friends are not living near you, a program called “Good Beginnings” run by the YWCA may be helpful.

Other positions

These holds may work for you as well. With time and practice, you will find the positions that work best for you and your babies.



Do I have special dietary needs?

Yes. Because you have more than one baby, you need extra energy from healthy foods. "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide" can help you make healthy food choices during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Your doctor, midwife or nurse can give you a copy or visit Health Canada's website: www.hc-sc.gc.ca

You also need lots of rest. Babies are a lot of work, no matter how many you have! Even when rest is hard to get, your body will adjust and make milk for your babies.

To learn how to have a healthy pregnancy, visit the Government of Canada's website: www.healthycanadians.ca/hp-gs/index_e.html

Should I feed two babies at the same time?

You may want to feed your babies one at a time in the early days. This lets you concentrate on one baby and one breast, and learn the signs of a good latch. This will make it easier when you start to feed them together.

When you are confident feeding one baby, try feeding two babies at once. This saves time that you can use to rest or eat. Feeding two at once also increases the hormones that tell your body to make more milk.

How do I breastfeed two babies at the same time?

At first you may need help to latch two babies on your breasts.

When you have more than two babies, feed baby 1 and 2 first. Then feed baby 3 and/or 4. At the next feeding, feed baby 3 and 4 first, then baby 1 and 2.

You may want to get the babies on the same schedule. When one baby wakes up for a feeding, wake the other one to feed them at the same time. If you have more than two babies, wake the other babies to feed when you have finished feeding the first two.

Sometimes one baby is more demanding than the others. Feed this baby when he or she is hungry. Your feeding schedule may need to be flexible to meet the babies' needs.

Keep a record of feeding and diaper changes for each baby.

What positions are good for feeding?

Choose a large chair, sofa or bed. When seated, use a stool to support your feet and pillows to support your back. You will also need several large pillows to support your arms and the babies.

It is very important that you and your babies are in a comfortable position while breastfeeding.

Football hold

This position is helpful for small babies, if you had a cesarean birth or if you are by yourself.



- Place each baby on a pillow with his/her feet towards your back.
- Put one baby on the breast. When he/she is latched on, adjust the pillow to hold him/her in this position.
- Then put the second baby on the breast and adjust the pillow.
- Put one arm around each baby to hold them in place.
- Support the back of each baby's neck and shoulders with your hands.

Parallel hold



- Place one baby on his/her side. Place the second baby in the football hold. The babies will be lying parallel to each other.
- Use pillows as needed to support the babies.
- Put one baby on the breast. When he/she is latched on, adjust the pillows to hold him/her in this position.
- Then put the second baby on the breast and adjust the pillow.
- Put one arm around each baby to hold them in place.

Crisscross hold



- Place a pillow under each elbow and one on your lap. Put one baby at a time on your breast. The babies will be lying on their sides and they will crisscross.
- Use your arms to support their backs. Clasp your hands around the babies and pull them close to you.