

11 Tips for Breastfeeding Your Multiples

NOTE: The following suggestions are provided as information only. If you have any concerns about your particular situation, please check with a Lactation Consultant or your own doctor.

- 1) **If you run into any difficulties breastfeeding**, get help right away. Don't wait. Sometimes the answer is very simple and a consultation with a Lactation Consultant may identify the problem and have everyone back on track very quickly.
- 2) **Yes, enough milk can be produced for two or even three babies.** Milk production is based on demand and supply. Frequent nursing stimulates breasts to meet nursing demands. Three things positively impact milk supply and production: a) frequent feedings of the babies; b) healthy eating, drinking and snacks; and c) keeping stress levels as low as possible.
- 3) **Simultaneous feedings helps get babies on the same schedule and saves an enormous amount of time.** Most mothers of multiples feed simultaneously or one after another. Your babies will let you know which method works best for them.
- 4) **Alternate breasts at each feed.** It will be necessary to make up a schedule so that you can remember who ate at which breast and when. By alternating breasts two important issues are addressed: a) one baby may be a better (stronger) sucker than the other thus stimulating the breast differently. Alternating breasts encourages both breasts to produce enough milk; b) when a baby only nurses at one breast, the lower eye doesn't get equal opportunity to focus, look around and strengthen. Alternating breasts gives each of the baby's eyes a chance to perform properly.
- 5) **It isn't unusual to have one baby who is a stronger sucker.** When settling down for a simultaneous feeding, put the stronger sucker to the breast first then spend time settling and arranging the second baby.
- 6) **For triplets or more**, it may be necessary to introduce some formula before the milk supply is fully established. There are a couple of choices within this situation: a) top up each baby after a breast feed; b) feed two by breast and one by bottle, alternating who gets which at each feed. A helpful idea for increasing breast milk with triplets is to feed two babies, at each breast, followed by the third baby on each breast. Such a routine provides optimum opportunity to increase milk supply to meet the demand. Keeping a schedule ensures all babies rotate equally.
- 7) **If you can, pump after each feed**, collecting and freezing pumped breast milk for bottle feeding. Label and date the bottles. Following is a guide for storing breast milk:

 At room temperature – 10 hours
 In the fridge – 8 days
 In a fridge freezer – 2 weeks
 In a deep freeze – 6 months or longer

 Previously frozen breast milk can be kept in the fridge for 24 hours. Do not refreeze previously frozen breast milk.*
- 8) **Never microwave breast milk.** The high temperatures can affect its beneficial properties. Breast milk defrosts very quickly in a bowl of hot water in the kitchen sink. The milk itself need not be hot, room temperature will do.
- 9) **Using a twin nursing pillow** is a real advantage. This larger pillow can comfortably cradle two babies and allows burping/ changing one while the other continues to feed.
- 10) **Breast feeding is a learned art**, for both mother and babies. Be patient, give it time and, if necessary, get some help.

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11) Babies hit a growth spurt at about 6 weeks.

As a result, they may feed more often. Many Moms interpret shorter times between feeds as they don't have enough milk.

Consequently, they become discouraged and quit nursing. Continuing to nurse will soon rebuild the milk supply to meet the demand. Don't give up too soon.

*Mothering Multiples: Breastfeeding & Caring for Twins & More, by Karen Kerkhoff Gromada, La Leche League International, 1999

Additional MBC Resources:

- *Breastfeeding Twins*, Multiple Births Canada pamphlet
- *Breastfeeding Triplets & Quadruplets*, Multiple Births Canada pamphlet
- *Nursing Your Infant Twins*, Multiple Births Canada booklet
- *Special Delivery: The Handbook for Parents of Triplets, Quadruplets & Quintuplets*, Multiple Births Canada booklet
- *Twin Care: Prenatal to Six Months*, Multiple Births Canada booklet
- *Expectant & New Parent Support Kit*, Multiple Births Canada
- *Fact Sheet Series: Breastfeeding Multiples – one in a series on breastfeeding multiples*

Other Resources:

Multiple Births Canada
www.multiplebirthscanada.org

Multiple Birth: Prenatal Education & Bereavement Support
www.multiplebirthsfamilies.com

La Leche League of Canada Referral Service
www.la lecheleague.org

Lactation Consulting Services Canada
www.breastfeedinghelp.ca

Dr. Jack Newman
www.drjacknewman.com

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Revised, 2008*

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