

Breastfeeding Multiples

Most mothers are able to breastfeed twins or more. Your body is able to produce breastmilk for more than one baby.

While Pregnant

- Eat a well-balanced diet to support healthy development and a higher birth weight.
- Learn in advance about breastfeeding and expressing your milk.
- Arrange for help with household tasks during the babies' first few months.
- Prepare and freeze meals that can be used once your babies are born.
- Prepare a comfortable area in your home for breastfeeding and have quick, easy and healthy snack choices.
- Talk to people who have breastfed multiples – if you don't know anyone, contact a multiple births group in your area for more support.

How to Begin

- Ask to have your babies placed skin-to-skin on your chest at birth, if medically stable. This will help get breastfeeding off to a good start.
- Feed your babies when they are showing signs that they are hungry. Your babies should eat 8 or more times in 24 hours. Early signs of hunger include rooting, sucking, hand-to-mouth movements, cooing and wiggling arms and legs. Your babies may show different feeding cues at different times.
- A deep latch will prevent sore nipples and build your milk supply. See the Breastfeeding Matters booklet <https://resources.beststart.org/product/b04e-breastfeeding-matters-book/> for more information about latching.
- You can breastfeed your babies separately or breastfeed two babies at the same time.
- It may be easier to breastfeed one baby at a time when you are learning.
- Once your babies get more practice with latching, you may want to try breastfeeding them at the same time.
- Watch both babies carefully during every feeding.

Remember: the more you breastfeed, hand express or pump, the more milk you will make.

- There are different positions for breastfeeding two babies at the same time. Using pillows can give you and your babies extra support.



Double Football Hold



Parallel Hold



Criss-Cross Hold

Graphics obtained with permission from <http://breastfeedingtwins.tripod.com>

- Experiment to find out what works best. Many mothers find that a combination of breastfeeding separately or at the same time works well.
- If breastfeeding two babies at the same time, try to alternate the side that each baby feeds on. This will help make sure that both breasts get the same stimulation.
- You may need to hand express or pump your milk if your babies are born early or if any baby is having a problem with breastfeeding. Express your milk until each baby is breastfeeding 8 or more times in 24 hours. Refer to the handouts Hand Expression and Pumping Guidelines.

Work with a health care professional skilled in helping breastfeeding parents to support you with your situation and needs.

- The need for a supplement should be based on a medical reason or your informed decision.
- If any of your babies need a supplement, use your expressed breastmilk or donor milk from a human milk bank. If human milk is not available, use a commercially prepared infant formula.
- If possible, breastfeed before giving a supplement – this will help your babies develop their suck and will help to build your milk supply.
- Talk to your health care provider to make an informed decision about how to give your baby a supplement.

If you have concerns about breastfeeding or think your baby is not getting enough, talk to your health care provider right away.

Helpful Tips:

- Sleep whenever you can.
- Be patient. Taking care of your babies is a full time job.
- Accept help. Ask for help with meals and household chores like cleaning, dishes and laundry.
- Try to eat healthy foods. Mothers of multiples need extra calories, choose quick and easy choices.
- Keep a record of feedings and diaper changes. This will help you to keep track of how each baby is doing.

Helpful Breastfeeding Resources

- Best start: <https://www.beststart.org/>
- Health811: call 811 or visit the website <https://health811.ontario.ca/>
- Local Public Health Unit: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/public-health-unit-locations>
- London Multiple Births Association <http://www.londonmultiples.com>
- La Leche League Canada: <http://www.llc.ca>
- Multiple Births Canada www.multiplebirths.ca

References:

- 1) Best Start Resource Centre (2017). Infant Formula: What You Need to Know. Retrieved from <https://resources.beststart.org/product/b19e-infant-formula-booklet/>
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- 3) Spencer, B., Hetzel Campbell, S., & Chamberlain, K. (2024). Core Curriculum for Interdisciplinary Lactation Care, 2nd Ed. Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- 4) Wambach, K. (2019). Breastfeeding and Human Lactation, 6th Ed. Jones & Bartlett Learning.

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Baby-Friendly Initiative