

# TIPS FOR BREASTFEEDING TWINS

It can be a shock to learn that you are pregnant with twins. 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 advantages human milk provides. And breastfeeding can help 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

- Nursing early and often is the best way to get a good start breastfeeding. However, if you or your babies have a health problem that necessitates separation, this doesn't mean you have to give up the idea of breastfeeding.
- If it is necessary to pump your milk because one or both babies cannot nurse, use a full-size automatic electric pump on 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

- Once the twins are healthy and at home, most mothers of twins find it easiest to nurse both at once. Use pillows to support the babies so your hands are free to help each one latch on correctly.
- 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. One position that allows simultaneous nursing of twins lying down is to lie nearly flat on your back with one baby lying next to you, his head at your breast and his feet pulled in close to your body. Let the second baby lie across your body, head at your breast and feet tucked in under the other baby's knees.

## 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. 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 the 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

**BE SURE TO MAKE FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS AWARE OF PRACTICAL AND HELPFUL WAYS THAT THEY CAN BE INVOLVED. ENCOURAGE THEM TO READ THE INFORMATION ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS SHEET SO THAT THEY CAN BE A HELP AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO YOU DURING THIS INCREDIBLE TIME IN YOUR LIFE!**

For more information on breastfeeding twins, mothers can call La Leche League International at (847) 519-7730 or 1-800-LA LECHE to locate a La Leche League Leader and receive a free catalogue that includes books and pamphlets on all aspects of breastfeeding, parenting, and special situations. Or write to LLLI, P.O. Box 4079, Schaumburg Il 60168-4079 USA. Visit our Web site at [www.lalecheleague.org/](http://www.lalecheleague.org/)

For breastfeeding support, contact:



# HELP! AN OPEN LETTER TO SPOUSES, FRIENDS, AND RELATIVES OF MOTHERS OF TWINS

Mothers of twins need help if they are to survive the first year. This may sound dramatic, but it is true. The biggest problems for mothers of twins are getting enough sleep, keeping up with minimal housework, finding outlets for negative feelings, and isolation. The help and support of friends, relatives, and spouses can mean the difference between making it and falling apart for a new mother of twins.

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 video tapes.
- 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. Retirees or stay-at-home mothers with school age children may also be willing to work for a lower wage.



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