



London Health Sciences Centre

Patient Information

BREASTFEEDING MULTIPLES

Most mothers are able to breastfeed twins or more. It is important to know that your body is able to produce breastmilk for more than one baby.

Importance of Breastfeeding Multiples:

- Helps protect against infection and illness.
- Saves time – two babies are able to breastfeed at once.
- Saves money – formula is expensive. The average cost of basic formula for 1 year in Ontario is:

Type of Formula	One Baby	Twins	Triplets
Ready to Feed	\$3360	\$6720	\$10,080
Liquid Concentrate	\$1100	\$2200	\$3300
Powder	\$900	\$1800	\$2700

Based on estimates from 3 parts of Ontario in 2014 and 2015 (Best Start Resource Centre, 2017)

While Pregnant:

- Eat a well-balanced diet to ensure 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 that baby is hungry include rooting, sucking, hand-to-mouth movements, cooing and wiggling arms and legs. Your babies may show different feeding cue's at different times.
- A deep latch will prevent sore nipples and build your milk supply. See the *Breastfeeding Matters* booklet 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 Guidelines from Pumping.

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

- The need for a supplement may 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 breastmilk 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 provider about different ways 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 chart of daily activities, including feedings. This will help you to keep track of how each baby is doing.

Breastfeeding Resources in the Community:

- Telehealth Ontario 24/7 Breastfeeding Support line 1-866-797-0000
- Local Public Health Unit: A public health nurse can help you over the phone or in person and can connect you with other supports.
- London Multiple Births Association <http://www.londonmultiples.com>
- La Leche League Canada: <http://www.lllc.ca>
- Multiple Births Canada <http://multiplebirthscanada.org>

References:

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- 3) Kerkhoff Gromada, K. (2010). ILCA's Inside Track: Twins. Doi: 10.1177/0890334410370419
- 4) Mohrbacher, N., & Stock, J. (2003; 2012 Update). *La Leche League International Breastfeeding Answer Book*. Schaumburg, IL: La Leche League International.
- 5) Smith, L. (2016). Postpartum Care. In Wambach, K. & Riordan, J's. *Breastfeeding and Human Lactation*, 5th ed. Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Developed by the Middlesex London Elgin Breastfeeding Coalition with representation from London Health Sciences Centre, Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital, Middlesex London Health Unit, and Elgin St. Thomas Public Health.
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