

Breastfeeding multiples ...definitely worth it!

by the Kapi Mana Multiple Birth Club



Nursing one twin in the cradle hold, using the free hand to comfort the twin not nursing.

Photo from www.breastfeeding.com

Twins is going to be hard enough – won't breastfeeding make it harder?

Why should I bother?

There is nothing better than a great breastfeeding relationship. For some this seems to come naturally the minutes the babies arrive. For others, establishing breastfeeding can take time, energy and persistence – but the rewards for the mother of multiples are many and definitely worth it. Here are just a few...

Combats Postnatal Depression

A pregnant woman with twins produces more hormones than that of a singleton – often causing serious nausea in early pregnancy. These hormones course through the woman's body throughout her pregnancy. A completely different set of hormones are created during labour, birth and then breastfeeding which balance the effects of the pregnancy hormones. Breastfeeding hormones are relaxing and encourage nurturing feelings towards her baby. Research indicates that the absence of

these balancing hormones increases the likelihood of PND in the mother. Women experiencing a multiple birth, and/or a caesarean, also common with multiple births, are already an at-risk group for PND, – so breastfeeding is a positive step in the right direction. A positive breastfeeding relationship is a positive emotional factor for a woman not only in terms of PND but also her general emotional state.

Breastfeeding is relaxing

Breastfeeding forces the mother to rest. Handing a baby and a bottle to someone else to feed may seem like a nice idea – but in reality it often lets mum run around doing housework, while someone else gets the nice job of sitting and feeding the baby. Breastfeeding ensures that the mother is the one sitting down – or better yet, lying down.

Breastfeeding (once established) takes less time

Breastfeeding means that the milk is ready when baby is; no need to make bottles or heat bottles or wait for them to cool while baby is crying, creating extra work. Although getting breastfeeding right can take a little time, sweat and even tears... the long term rewards are fantastic. As babies grow they become very efficient, taking less time at the breast. Tandem feeding also works for many people. Many women find they can sleep while breastfeeding.

Cheaper

Breastfeeding is cheaper on the family budget, the country's budget and the world budget. It costs the family, the nation and the world BILLIONS OF DOLLARS a year in costs to the health system, pollution and production of formula.

Breastfeeding is a cure-all!

All woes can be fixed by breastfeeding. When everyone is crying at least mum has breastfeeding to fall back on! (It's a fantastic design feature that the breast goes in the screaming mouth – very difficult to cry when you have a nipple

in it!! Breasts are attached to mum – so baby gets a cuddle as well – what more could they possibly need?) Breast milk has sedative qualities and the physical closeness to mum is very soothing, and naturally very good at soothing tired babies to sleep.

Healthier babies

Breastfeeding means fewer visits to the doctor, fewer gastrointestinal problems and fewer ear infections. Long term health benefits for the breastfed baby are more positive – less obesity and diabetes, healthier organs – all twin families need that! Breast milk changes to meet the needs of the baby. Mother's milk passes on the mother's antibodies to her babies giving them their first immunisations.

Bonding

Bonding can take time with twins. Breastfeeding allows the same bonding vehicle as a singleton. It may take time for the mum to feel connected with individual babies – but they experience the individual benefits that breastfeeding brings straight away. Breastfeeding releases hormones that enhance the nurturing feeling in mum – helps with the bonding process. The physical closeness of breastfeeding also helps with the bonding process, quicker and faster than anything else. There is nothing on earth like the motherly pleasure of breastfeeding two babies, with four eyes peering up at you.

A good breastfeeding team can be a fantastic asset to the multiple family. There are many reasons why breastfeeding should and can be a goal for you and your family. There are many factors involved in a positive breastfeeding relationship. If your breastfeeding situation is causing you stress – this is not positive. Find someone to talk to – start with La Leche League, and read our library books on breastfeeding for more information.

Thank you to the great team at the Kapi Mana Club. If you have time, visit their fab website at www.kapimanamultiples.org.nz.