

Tips for breastfeeding multiples

The following are the real *basics of breastfeeding* tips. If you plan to breastfeed twins or multiples, you will need use the antenatal period to find all the information you can: the more you know, the better. To breast feed successfully you need:

Confidence

You need to know you can do it. We are all hardwired to be able to breast successfully, but many of us do not see other women breastfeeding as we grow up, and it is therefore not familiar. Remember than up until about 60 years ago, before formula was invented, all babies were breastfed – singletons, twins and triplets. Your body can make enough milk to safely feed twins and triplets, so long as you believe you can.

Determination

Lots of people (including friends, family and health professionals) will erode your confidence about your choice and ability to breastfeed: this especially true of people who have never breastfed, or ever breastfed twins or multiples. Don't be put off! I can personally assure you that breast feeding twins is no harder than breastfeeding a singleton, once you get the hang of positioning two babies. And what the negative people don't know is that breastfeeding successfully is a really lovely experience,

aside from all the health benefits for both mother and babies.

Knowledge

You need to find out all about breastfeeding before your babies are born, preferably from your midwife and local multiple birth club. I have listed some helpful websites at the end of this article.

You need a basic understanding of the demand and supply concept behind breastfeeding – the more the babies feed, the more milk you will produce. In the first few days you will be producing colostrum, which will be replaced by mature milk by about day 3. *One really great thing I found with breastfeeding my twins was that I didn't get badly engorged breasts when my milk did come in.*

You need to know how to help your babies latch on properly. Also know that it shouldn't hurt – if it does, you need help to get the babies latching on properly, or to reposition them. Seek help fast if there are problems with pain, and you will avoid nipple problems.

Nutrition and rest

Ask any dairy farmer what cows need to produce plenty of milk; it is not too different with lactating humans, although it isn't researched nearly as much. You need to drink enough

water – for twins this will be about 3 litres per day – and eat sufficient protein, carbohydrates and fat to produce good quality milk. In my experience, this fact is not stressed firmly enough to mothers of multiples – you will need to eat and drink well to produce enough milk. And, if you want to breastfeed multiples successfully, losing weight will need to wait...although you will probably lose weight anyhow.

You will also need to get enough rest, especially in the early days. Tandem feeding twins, or two of your multiples, will be helpful here, as it speeds things up.

Comfort

Breastfeed in a comfortable position, in an appropriate chair and using enough pillows or cushions to make sure your babies are at the right height. A breastfeeding pillow (there are lots of different ones on the market) is really helpful with feeding two babies simultaneously.

You need time and space for you and your babies to get to know each other, and get breastfeeding established. You will need privacy, at first, so that you can relax, and let your milk down. Like learning any new skill, it will take practice – for all of you. You will also need patience, as it can take about 6 weeks for breastfeeding and milk supply to be fully established – longer if you have premature babies.

Support

You need lots of support – especially from your husband/partner. Research has shown that an informed, supportive and understanding partner is one of the most significant factors in successful breastfeeding—so, read up guys!

A lactation consultant, experienced midwife or another woman who is confidently breastfeeding, are other great sources of support. One of the most helpful things for me when I learned to breastfeed my first daughter, was a really good friend who brought her 6-week old baby (her third) over for the morning and sat beside me and breastfed, and made



Nursing Positions for Twins. www.breastfeeding.com

Continued on page 16

herself available if I need to phone her to ask for help or advice.

In the early months, ask for and accept as much help on the domestic front as you can – that way you can reserve your energy for breastfeeding.

A breast pump

You may like to invest in a breast pump (or rent one from a multiple birth club), so that you can relieve engorged breasts, improve your supply, keep your supply going for premature babies or babies with latching problems, or to put some

aside for later or to feed a multiple (if they aren't taking turns).

Helpful websites

There are lots of websites with information about breastfeeding, but these two really stood out.

breastfeeding.com - I can thoroughly recommend this website. It is comprehensive and up-to-date information about every aspect of breastfeeding, including nursing twins.

parentingweb.com - Information on nursing higher-order-multiples was

harder to find, but this site has a range of articles on breastfeeding triplets.

Fierro, P. *Breastfeeding twins, triplets and multiples. Hints to help you successfully breastfeed twins or more.* <http://multiples.about.com>

Peck, W. & Jones, M. (August 5, 2009). *Breastfeeding advice from a certified lactation consultant - parts 1, 2 & 3.* <http://www.examiner.com>

Rich, M. *Tips for breastfeeding twins.* <http://www.life123.com>

Sears, Dr. W. (2009). *Ask Dr. Sears: Breastfeeding triplets.* <http://www.parenting.com>



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- Costs for day registration is \$100
- Accommodation is twin share (single available at an additional charge)

PLACES ARE STILL AVAILABLE

For more information on workshops and speakers and for registration forms see www.nzmba/info or contact Monique at nigelclarke@paradise.net.nz