

National Organization of Mothers Of Twins Clubs, Inc.	SUBJECT:	Breastfeeding vs. Formula Feeding Multiple Birth Children
	RESEARCHER:	National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc.
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PURPOSE: The purpose of this survey was to gather data regarding the choice to breastfeed or formula feed infant multiples.

METHOD: A survey consisting of 26 questions was made available online via Survey Monkey. The survey was to be completed by parents of multiple birth children.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Three-hundred ninety four surveys consisting of 26 questions were tabulated with 11.2 percent (44) of multiples aged 0 to 6 months, 11.7 percent (46) aged 7 to 12 months, 12.2 percent (48) aged 1 year to 18 months, 9.9 percent (39) aged 18 months to 2 years, 26.5 percent (104) aged 2 to 3 years old and the majority (28.3 percent; 111) older than 4 years. Two respondents skipped this question.
2. When asked the mother's age at the time of delivery, a majority of respondents (39.3 percent; 155) reported 31 to 35 years old, followed by ages 26 to 30 (27.4 percent; 108) and ages 36 to 40 (20.8 percent; 82). Much fewer respondents reported being 41 years of age or older (6.3 percent; 25), 22 to 25 years old (4.6 percent; 18) and 18 to 21 (1.5 percent; 6). No respondents reported being under the age of 18 at the time of their delivery and no respondents skipped this question.
3. Just over 40 percent of the sample (41.5 percent; 163) reported having their multiples at 37 weeks gestation or greater, with 1.8 percent (7) reporting 40 weeks, 5.9 percent (23) reporting 39 weeks, 14.2 percent (56) reporting 38 weeks and 19.6 percent (77) reporting 37 weeks. Nearly 40 percent (39.7 percent; 156) reported having their multiples between weeks 34 and 36 (week 36 19.6 percent, 77; week 35 12.0 percent, 47; week 34 8.1 percent, 32). Fewer respondents reported having their multiples prior to 34 weeks, with 3.8 percent (15) reporting 33 weeks, 5.6 percent (22) reporting 32 weeks, 1.3 percent (5) reporting 31 weeks, 2.8 percent (11) reporting 30 weeks, 2.3 percent (9) reporting 29 weeks, 1.8 percent (7) reporting 28 weeks, and less than one percent each for 27 weeks (0.3 percent; 1), 26 weeks (0.5 percent; 2), 25 weeks (0.3 percent; 1) and 24 weeks (0.3 percent; 1). One respondent reported having their twins and 41 weeks gestation, and one respondent reported that one twin was born at 28w and one was born at 29w. Two respondents skipped this question.

RESULTS

1. When asked whether their multiples were their first born children, most respondents (62.4 percent; 244) reported that they were their first children and 37.6 percent (147) reported that they were not. Three respondents skipped this question.
2. The survey next asked whether respondents breastfed their first children. Nearly one third (31.9 percent; 123) reported they did, while 7.3 percent (28) reported they did not. Sixty point nine percent (235) reported that their multiples were their first born. Eight respondents skipped this question.
3. Nearly one third of respondents (28.9 percent; 113) reported that they exclusively fed their multiples breast milk while 38.9 percent (152) reported that they fed mostly breast milk and sometimes formula. Twenty one point seven percent (85) reported that they fed their multiples mostly formula and some breast milk, while 10.5 percent reported that they fed their multiples exclusively formula. Three respondents skipped this question.

EXCLUSIVE FORMULA FEEDING

1. Respondents who reported exclusively formula feeding their multiples were asked why, and were instructed to select all of the reasons that applied. A majority of respondents (41.5 percent; 17) reported that it was too challenging with multiples. Just over one third of respondents (34.1 percent; 14) reported they chose formula for medical reasons, 29.3 percent (12) reported they were not interested in breastfeeding and 7.3 percent (3) reported they chose formula because they were working. Sixteen respondents selected "other" and reported a variety of reasons such as having other young children at home to care for, a low or

absent milk supply, babies did not learn how to appropriately nurse or they did not believe there were benefits to breastfeeding over formula feeding. Three hundred and fifty three respondents skipped this question.

BREASTFEEDING

1. Respondents who breastfed were asked how long they provided milk for each multiple. For Multiple A, 3 respondents reported one week or less, four respondents reported 2 weeks, two respondents reported 3 weeks and ten respondents reported one month. Two respondents reported 5 weeks, 9 respondents reported 6 weeks and 14 respondents reported 2 months. Two respondents reported 2.5 months, 21 respondents reported 3 months, 12 respondents reported 4 months and two respondents reported 4.5 months. Eight respondents reported 5 months, one respondent reported 5.5 months, 16 respondents reported 6 months, one respondent reported 6.5 months, 11 respondents reported 7 months, four respondents reported 7.5 months, 13 respondents reported 8 months and two respondents reported 8.5 months. Nine respondents reported 9 months, one respondent reported 9.5 months, 20 respondents reported 10 months, one respondent reported 10.5 months, nine respondents reported 11 months, one respondent reported 11.5 months and 19 respondents reported between 12 and 12.5 months. Thirteen respondents reported between 13 and 13.5 months, 12 respondents reported 14 months, 11 respondents reported between 15 and 15.5 months, eight respondents reported between 16 and 17 months, four respondents reported 18 months, 6 respondents reported 20 months, two respondents reported 21 months and two respondents reported 23 months. Three respondents reported 2 years, 11 respondents reported between 25 to 35 months, one respondent reported until age 3, and four respondents reported until age 4. Sixty two respondents reported that they were still currently breastfeeding their multiple A.

For Multiple B, 4 respondents reported one week or less, four respondents reported 2 weeks, two respondents reported 3 weeks and ten respondents reported one month. Three respondents reported 5 weeks, 11 respondents reported 6 weeks and 14 respondents reported 2 months. Three respondents reported between 9 and 11 weeks and 13 respondents reported 3 months. 13 respondents reported between 4 to 4.5 months, 8 respondents reported between 5 to 5.5 months, 16 respondents reported between 6 to 6.5 months, 18 respondents reported between 7 to 7.5 months and 12 respondents reported between 8 to 8.5 months. Ten respondents reported between 9 to 9.5 months, 17 respondents reported between 10 to 10.5 months, nine respondents reported between 11 to 11.5 months, and 17 respondents reported between 12 to 12.5 months. Thirteen respondents reported between 13 and 13.5 months, 12 respondents reported 14 months, 12 respondents reported 15 months, nine respondents reported between 16 and 17.5 months, four respondents reported 18 months, 5 respondents reported 20 months, three respondents reported 21 months and one respondent reported 23 months. Two respondents reported 2 years, 10 respondents reported between 25 to 36 months and five respondents reported between ages 3.5 to 4 years. Fifty eight respondents reported that they were still currently breastfeeding their multiple A.

Nine respondents reported breastfeeding Multiple C, with three reporting between 3 to 5 months, three reporting between 7.5 and 9.5 months, one reporting 14 months, one reporting 20 months and one respondent reported she was still currently breastfeeding Multiple C. There were no responses for multiples higher than Baby C. Forty eight respondents skipped this question.

2. Respondents were asked why they breastfed their multiples, and were instructed to select all of the reasons that applied. Nearly all respondents (98.8 percent; 342) reported breastfeeding for the health of their multiples, while two thirds (66.8 percent; 231) reported because of the bonding experience with their multiples. Just over half of respondents (54.0 percent; 187) selected breastfeeding for economical reasons, while 50.9 percent (176) breastfed for convenience and 29.8 percent (103) breastfed to lose weight. Thirty eight respondents selected “other” and reported a variety of reasons such as believing that breast milk really was best, wanting to experience all areas of motherhood, helping to regulate their hormones, preventing food allergies and increasing immunities, health benefits for the mother, pressure from society, to prove to others that it could be done and just felt it was the right choice. Three hundred and fifty three respondents skipped this question.
3. Respondents were asked if they supplemented with formula and why, and were instructed to select all of the reasons that applied. Nearly half of respondents (45.0 percent; 147) reported having insufficient milk, 22.9 percent (75) reported wanting to have family members help with feeding and 20.8 percent (68) reported low weight issues with their multiples. Forty respondents (12.2 percent) reported supplementing due to work, 7.0 percent (23) due to sore nipples and 3.7 percent (12) due to mastitis. Ninety three respondents selected “other” and reported a variety of reasons such as health reasons of the mother or baby

- (surgery, recovery, etc), exhaustion from higher order multiples, husband deployed with military, babies' difficulty in nursing, low or no milk supply, supplemented when in public, NICU or Dr's orders to difficulty finding enough time to nurse and/or pump, especially with other young children to care for or convenience. Forty seven respondents skipped this question.
4. Nearly all respondents (97.1 percent; 337) reported that they did not use supplemental milk from a milkbank or donated milk, while 2.9 percent (10) reported that they did. Forty seven respondents skipped this question.
 5. Nearly all respondents (94.8 percent; 328) reported that they used a breast pump, while 5.2 percent (18) did not. Forty eight respondents skipped this question.
 6. Respondents were asked what type of breast pump they used. A majority of respondents (81.3 percent; 266) used Medela, while 8 percent (26) used Ameda, 2.4 percent (8) used Avent, 1.5 percent (5) used Evenflo and 1.2 percent (4) used Playtex. No respondents reported using Dr. Brown's, First Years, Whisper Wear or Whittlestone. Eighteen respondents (5.5 percent) selected "other" and reported a variety of selections such as a rented hospital pump, they didn't know or could not remember or a Lansinoh. Sixty seven respondents skipped this question.
 7. When asked if they rented their breast pump, 63.3 percent (205) reported they did not, while 36.7 percent (119) reported that they did. Seventy respondents skipped this question.
 8. Respondents were asked if they fed their multiples exclusively with pumped milk from a bottle, why they did so, and were instructed to select all of the reasons that applied. Most respondents (63.8 percent; 187) reported they did not exclusively feed pumped milk from a bottle. Sixty eight respondents (23.2 percent) reported latching problems, 19.8 percent (58) reported prematurity, 10.9 percent (32) reported low weight, 8.2 percent (24) reported work and 7.5 percent (22) reported long nursing times. Forty two respondents selected "other" and reported a variety of reasons such as one or more of the babies needing fortification, either having other people to help with feedings or NOT having others to help with feedings (pump when babies are asleep), health reasons of the mother or baby, not enough breasts for higher order multiples and convenience. Forty seven respondents skipped this question.
 9. When asked if they used the services of a lactation consultant, 79.4 percent (258) reported they did, and 20.6 percent (67) reported they did not. Sixty nine respondents skipped this question.
 10. Respondents were asked how they were referred to their lactation consultant. Just over two thirds of respondents (64.3 percent; 178) reported during their hospital stay. Less frequently reported sources were self (5.8 percent; 16), parents of multiples club (4.3 percent; 12), childbirth class (4.0 percent; 11), friend (3.6 percent; 10) and 1.8 percent (5) reported their OB. Forty five respondents selected "other" and reported a variety of other sources such as online, pediatrician, La Leche Club, WIC office, doula, previous experience or they did not have one. One hundred seventeen respondents skipped this question.
 11. Respondents were asked why they used a lactation consultant, and were asked to select all that applied. Just over half (53.6 percent; 147) reported using a consultant because the babies had difficulties breastfeeding, 52.6 percent (144) reported they were concerned about breastfeeding multiples, 50.4 percent (138) because they were a first time mom, 13.1 percent (36) because the child/ren had medical issues and 5.8 percent (16) because the mother had a medical issue. Fifty four respondents (19.7 percent) selected "other" and reported a variety of other reasons such as feeding issues, wanted the extra advice, planned on using one before the babies were born, practical advice, feeling overwhelmed, complications from prematurity, help with pumping or first time breastfeeding. One hundred twenty respondents skipped this question.
 12. When asked if they used the services of a lactation consultant with older children, 20.4 percent (56) reported that they did and 10.5 percent (29) reported that they did not. Just over two thirds of respondents (69.1 percent; 190) reported this was their first experience. One hundred nineteen respondents skipped this question.

ADDITIONAL BREASTFEEDING QUESTIONS

1. Respondents were asked if they fed their multiples at the same time, what hold they used. Just over half (57.4 percent; 195) reported using the football hold, 1.8 percent (6) reported spoons, and 30 percent (102) reported they did not feed at the same time. Thirty seven respondents (10.9 percent) selected "other" and reported a variety of other options such as a combination of the above, what ever worked, bouncy seats, boppy pillows, breast crawl, on lap or bottle propping. Fifty four respondents skipped this question.
2. Respondents were asked if they found a breastfeeding pillow useful, 78.6 percent (239) reported yes and 21.4 percent (65) reported no. One hundred fifty four respondents shared why or why not, and reported a variety of responses – some positive such as it was the only way to feed more than one baby at a time, babies would fall asleep in pillows, provided more comfort for mom and/or babies, allowed to nurse hands free or helped to prop babies into correct position. Several respondents reported negative responses such as

- discomfort for mom and/or babies, too difficult to use with preemies, too big/clumsy/awkward, wrong positioning or too difficult when alone with the babies. Forty nine respondents skipped this question.
3. Respondents were asked if they do/did work outside of the home while breastfeeding. Just over two thirds of respondents (65.8 percent; 227) reported no, 21.2 percent (73) reported they worked outside of the home full time and 13.0 percent (45) reported they worked outside of the home part time. Forty nine respondents skipped this question.

BREASTFEEDING AND WORK

1. Respondents were asked if their employer is/was supportive of their needs as a breastfeeding mom. Most respondents (90.7 percent; 107) reported yes, while 9.3 percent (11) reported no. Two hundred seventy six respondents skipped this question.
2. Respondents were asked if they are/were provided with a private, comfortable place to pump their milk during work hours. Three quarters of respondents (75.4 percent; 89) reported yes and 24.6 percent (29) reported no. Two hundred seventy six respondents skipped this question.

FINAL QUESTIONS

1. Respondents were asked if they were currently a member of a parent of multiples club affiliated with the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc., 77.1 percent (296) reported they were and 22.9 percent (88) reported they were not. Ten respondents skipped this question.
2. Respondents were asked if they had any comments or suggestions regarding this survey. Sixty six respondents provided a variety of answers, such as the challenges that they faced during breastfeeding but to advise other moms to stick with it, to seek out help and advice from experts and other moms, or that they tried and it just didn't work for them due to challenges, exhaustion, etc. Several respondents reported some of the category choices didn't quite fit them so they didn't know which to pick (worked from home, pumped exclusively, only supplemented occasionally, etc). Ten respondents skipped this question.

CONCLUSION

The effort to collect data on breastfeeding and formula feeding multiples resulted in nearly 400 responses. Over half of respondents (54.8 percent; 215) were parents of multiples ages 2 and older, and most mothers (39.3 percent; 155) reported being between the ages of 31 to 35 years of age at the time of delivery. Just over 40 percent of the sample (41.5 percent; 163) reported having their multiples at 37 weeks gestation or greater.

Most respondents (62.4 percent; 244) reported that their multiples were their first children and 67.8 percent (265) reported that they breastfed either exclusively or with supplemental formula. One hundred twenty three respondents (31.9 percent) reported they breastfed their first children. Most respondents who reported exclusively formula feeding their multiples (41.5 percent; 17) did so because it was too challenging to breastfeed with multiples.

Respondents who breastfed were asked how long they provided milk for each multiple. For both Multiples A and B nearly half of the respondents had stopped breastfeeding by nine months. Two thirds of respondents reported they had stopped breastfeeding Multiple C by nine months. Respondents who reported breastfeeding their multiples most frequently chose this due to the health of their multiples (98.8 percent; 342). Those who reported supplementing most frequently did so due to insufficient milk (45.0 percent; 147), although nearly all who supplemented (97.1 percent; 337) reported that they did not use milk from a milkbank or donated milk. Nearly all respondents (94.8 percent; 328) reported that they used a breast pump, with the Medela pump reported the most frequently (81.3 percent; 266). Just over two thirds of respondents reported they did not rent their breast pump (63.3 percent; 205). Most respondents (63.8 percent; 187) reported they did not feed their multiples exclusively with pumped milk from a bottle, however, those that did reported latching problems (23.2 percent; 68).

Just over three quarters of respondents (79.4 percent; 258) used a lactation consultant, and 64.3 percent (178) reported their lactation consultants were referred by their hospital. When asked why they used a lactation consultant, the most frequently cited responses were because the babies had trouble breastfeeding (53.6 percent; 147), 52.6 percent (144) reported they were concerned about breastfeeding multiples and 50.4 percent (138) because they were a first time mom. Most respondents (20.4 percent; 56) reported that they used a lactation consultant with their older children.

For those respondents who breastfed their multiples at the same time, the football hold (57.4 percent; 195) was reported the most frequently. Over three quarters of respondents 78.6 percent (239) reported they used a breastfeeding pillow.

Most respondents (65.8 percent; 227) reported they did not work outside of the home, while 34.2 percent (118) reported they worked outside of the home either full or part time. Nearly all (90.7 percent; 107) respondents reported that their employer is/was supportive of their needs as a breastfeeding mom and over three quarters of respondents (75.4 percent; 89) reported they were provided with a quiet, comfortable place to pump while at work.

Most respondents (77.1 percent; 296) reported being a member of a parent of multiples club affiliated with the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc.

Sixty six respondents provided a variety of final comments on the survey, such as the challenges that they faced during breastfeeding but to advise other moms to stick with it, to seek out help and advice from experts and other moms, or that they tried and it just didn't work for them due to challenges, exhaustion, etc. Several respondents reported some of the category choices didn't quite fit them so they didn't know which to pick (worked from home, pumped exclusively, only supplemented occasionally, etc).