If you are expecting multiples or have recently given birth, caring for two or more babies at once can be challenging and sometimes overwhelming. We want to offer encouragement, advice and practical knowledge to help you on the path to successful parenting. Parenting multiples is a joint responsibility for both parents. Start making plans early for mutual participation in the many tasks that will double and triple. You and your partner both need time to enjoy your babies, and you both need private time away from your babies.

Connect with another parent of multiples—
While awaiting your babies’ birth or shortly after delivery, seek out another parent of multiples in your area. That person can offer you personal, individual support and answer specific questions. Your health care provider or hospital may be able to refer you to other parents of multiples for networking and mutual support.

Connect with your local parents of multiples club—
Local clubs are full of members who have multiples and understand your situation best. Most clubs allow expectant parents to attend meetings. Do attend, ask questions and make connections!

Clubs generally meet monthly as a means of support and education for members. Clothing and equipment exchanges (and sales) are a valuable part of the local club affiliation. Many clubs maintain libraries that focus on the subject of parenting multiples. If your needs are more specific, the club can help you connect with parents of children who are facing challenges similar to yours.

If there is no club in your area, Multiples of America offers an Individual Affiliate membership. You may also be interested in organizing your own group. Multiples of America offers the booklet, *How to Organize a Parents of Multiples Club* to guide you in that process. Good luck with your multiples! It is an exciting time for all. Please know that we are only a phone call away!

There are two types of twins: Monozygotic (MZ) or one-egg twins (commonly referred to as identical twins) and Dizygotic (DZ) or two-egg twins (commonly referred to as fraternal twins).

- Identical twins result when a single fertilized egg splits after conception. These twins are generally alike.
- Identical twinning has a constant occurrence throughout the world.
- Identical twins have the same chromosomes and are the same sex, same blood type, and have the same eye and hair color, same nose, ear and lip shapes.
- Fraternal twins result from two fertilized eggs and are not any more alike than any two singletons born to the same parents.
- They may or may not be the same sex.
- Fraternal twinning is a genetic trait that tends to run in families.
- Higher order multiples can be identical, fraternal, or a combination of both.
New Parents

• Establish a list of priorities. Babies’ needs will head the list, including feeding, bathing, cuddling, and sleeping. Rest for you should be high on the list as well.
• Use a chart to see at a glance who has been cared for and at what time.
• Accept all offers of help from anyone.
• Treat your babies as individuals. Avoid referring to them as “the twins” or “the triplets.” Instead, use their given names.
• Be sure to take photos of each child separately for the time when one will ask for a “picture of me.”
• Use care in selecting toys. As your babies grow, play becomes serious business. Toys that are suitable for singletons can become weapons when there are two or more. As the children get older, try to choose different toys for each to encourage sharing.
• Build a special one-to-one relationship with each child. Look for special talents and offer praise often.
• Multiples may develop a special bond between them. Raise them as individuals, but allow them to maintain this bond. Your children may talk to each other in a language only they can understand. Don’t be upset by the “twintalk.”

Breastfeeding Multiples

• Many women have successfully nursed their multiples! Consult your health care provider or local breastfeeding support group if you are considering breastfeeding. Members of a local Parents of Multiples Club are good resources.
• Follow doctor’s advice given on proper diet, rest, nipple care, and breast pumping. Remember, your fluid intake should be one to one and a half quarts more than usual.
• Alternate breasts for each feeding of your babies. One may require a larger amount of milk than the other(s), and sucking stimulates the breast to produce more.
• With twins, nurse your babies at the same time, if possible. A U-shaped nursing pillow may be helpful. Two bed pillows work well, too.
• Don’t be alarmed with the color and consistency of the babies’ stools as they are usually looser and lighter in color than those of bottle-fed babies.

Bottle-feeding Multiples

• Purchase different styles/colors of bottles/nipples if the babies are put on different formulas to simplify identification.
• Use a chart to document feedings.
• Formulas come in many forms (powdered, concentrated, and ready-to-feed). Unless specified by your doctor, choose whichever is most convenient and follow preparation instructions carefully.
• Formula is also available in soy, rice, dairy, almond and coconut options. Seeking advice from a healthcare provider is best when making one of these choices.
• Your doctor may recommend sterilizing bottles and nipples during the first few months. If using a dishwasher for bottles, additional sterilization may not be required.
• Encourage Dad and siblings to assist.
• Take time to cuddle each baby after feeding and during burping.
• If you are alone and your multiples need to be fed, you may bottle feed them by putting each in an infant seat and positioning yourself accordingly.

Feeding Multiples

• When bottlefeeding or breastfeeding, burp babies midway through and after feedings.
• Use the same spoon and bowl when babies are eating solid foods unless either baby is sick. Feed baby food directly from the jar at room temperature, discarding any leftover food to avoid bacterial growth.
• Consult your doctor for advice on post-feeding sleeping positions.

Twining Fact:
Fraternal twinning is passed on as a genetic trait and appears in the women only. If you are a female and your mother had fraternal twins, you would have an increased chance of having fraternal twins yourself. Your brothers would not have an increased chance, but they might pass the genetic trait on to their daughters, who would then have an increased chance of having twins.

Countdown to Multiple Parenthood

9. Get as much rest as you can. This may prevent premature labor and delivery.
8. A multiple pregnancy is likely to be more uncomfortable than a single one. You may have to stop work earlier, give up traveling, and make more frequent visits to your doctor.
7. Be aware of the importance of folic acid in your diet. Obtain good obstetrical care. This is vital because of the tendency toward premature delivery and other complications. Follow the advice of your health care provider.
6. Prepare your older children for the coming event to avoid possible jealousy. Plan to make them an active, helpful part of the new experience.
5. Select different colored clothing when choosing your babies’ layette. This helps in identifying each at a glance. For twins, you will need 1-1/2 times the amount of clothing needed for one baby. Adjust accordingly for higher order multiples.
4. Choose your babies’ names with care—they are theirs for life. Avoid rhyming names which might seem cute at the time of birth, but confusing later on.
3. Plan to use a diaper service or disposable diapers unless you have extra household help. If you do use disposable diapers, keep at least a dozen cloth diapers on hand for emergencies.
2. Plan to have help after the babies are born, especially if you already have small children at home. Ask your helpers to visit you at home prior to the big day so they will not be strangers to your children.
1. Contact your local Parents of Multiples club for more information on raising multiples. Another excellent resource is Multiples of America’s website!
Multiple Statistics

- Slightly more than half of all twins born are male.
- Approximately one-forth of identical twins are mirror image twins (right side of one will match the left side of the co-twin).
- In this country, approximately one-third of all twins are identical, one-third are same-sex fraternal and one-third are boy/girl fraternal.
- The first twin is often born head first, while the second twin is often breech or transverse. Slightly less than half of all twins are premature. For more information on premature infants, contact the Special Needs Coordinator through the Multiples of America Executive Office.
- Statistics from Multiples of America’s research survey on multiple pregnancy reveal that 83 percent of all multiple pregnancies are diagnosed by the second trimester and 95 percent prior to delivery.

Pregnancy

- The average duration of a normal pregnancy is 40 weeks. In a twin pregnancy, average duration is about 37 weeks.
- The interval between the births can vary from as little as three minutes to up to an hour or more. Sometimes the second baby must be repositioned for delivery.
- The average birth weight for singletons is 7 lbs. 7 oz., while for twins the average birth weight is 5 lbs. 5 oz. A difference of 2 to 3 lbs. in birth weights between twins is not unusual.
- Examination of the placenta is not a foolproof method of determining twin type.
- Whether multiples are monozygotic or dizygotic can be determined by DNA analysis of blood or cheek cells, complete blood studies, and other special tests.
- The CDC recommends the tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap) vaccine for:
  - Pregnant women. The CDC recommends that women get Tdap during each pregnancy, preferably between 27 and 36 weeks gestation, regardless of when they last had the shot.
  - Children age 11 to 18 who have completed the DTaP vaccine series.
  - Adults 19 to 64. (If you plan to be around babies soon, it’s best to get it at least two weeks beforehand.)
  - Adults 65 and older, if they plan to be around babies.

Incidence of Multiple Birth

According to the website for the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), the 2013 twin birth rate was 33.7 per 1,000 total births) had been rising steadily by 76 percent from 1980-2009. Rates rose nearly 3 percent a year during the 1990s, but the pace of increase had slowed to less than one-half of 1 percent annually since the mid-2000s. There were 132,324 births in twin deliveries in 2013, a 3 percent decline from 2009, similar to the percent decline in the number of singleton births.

Higher Order Multiples

Higher order multiples (HOMs) have become more common because of the availability of infertility treatments. However, the downward trend in the rate of triplet and higher order multiple births, observed since 1999, continued in 2013. The rate of triplet/+ births declined 13 percent in 2013 to 119.5 per 100,000 births from 137.6 in 2010. The 2013 rate is the lowest in 18 years (1995). The triplet/+ birth rate (number of triplets, quadruplets, and quintuplets and other higher-order multiples per 100,000 births) rose more than 400 percent during the 1980s and 1990s, but has declined almost 33 percent since the 1998 peak (193.5). The 2013 number of triplet/+ births (4,700) was the lowest reported since 1995 and includes 4,364 triplets, 270 quadruplets, and 66 quintuplets and higher-order multiples.

Folic Acid

Each year in the United States, about 4,000 pregnancies are affected by birth defects of the brain and neural tube (spinal cord). In 1998, the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine recommended that all women of childbearing age consume 4 mg of the B vitamin folic acid to reduce the risk of these defects. To get this recommended amount of folic acid, eat a healthy diet and take a multivitamin supplement every day. Foods high in folate include: orange juice, green leafy vegetables, beans, broccoli, fortified breakfast cereals, and enriched grain products.

Development of Multiples

Physical

- The weight of identical twins becomes more similar as they get older. Usually the degree of similarity at 24 months is maintained at ages 3, 5, and 8 years. Fraternal twins tend to show a decline in weight resemblance from birth to 8 years. In boy/girl twins, boys tend to weigh slightly more than girls at birth.

Social

- In terms of social development, identical twins tend to show about the same degree of competency in dealing with others, exhibit similar interest patterns, and similar attitudes and feelings. Fraternal twins differ from each other in social development to the same degree as ordinary siblings, especially if they are of different sexes. Twin girls, especially identical twin girls, are frequently more dependent upon each other than either boy/girl or boy twins. Identical girls are most likely to remain very close throughout life, followed by fraternal girls, identical boys, fraternal boys, and boy/girl pairs.

Learning

- The IQs of identical twins seldom vary more than five points. The IQs of fraternal twin may be as different as those of singletons born in the same family. Speech development in twins may be slower (by about three months) than in singletons because twins are frequently premature and often develop their own language. By the time twins are 8-years-old, they have usually caught up with singletons.

Layette List

With the exception of the items marked with an asterisk(*), suggested quantities are per baby.

- Car Seat (1) - Quilts (2)
- Twin Stroller (1)* - Wash Cloths (4)
- Crib (1) - Hooded Towels (2)
- Changing Table (1)* - Bathtub (1)*
- Playpen (1) - Infant Nail Clippers (1)*
- Swing (1) - Thermometer (1)
- Dresser (1) - Acetaminophen Drops
- Nursery Monitor (1)* - Appropriate Cold
- Soft Baby Carrier (1) - Weather Clothing
- Cool Mist Humidifier (1)* - Bottles & Nipples (10)
- Pacifiers (4) - Bottle Brush (1)
- Undershirts (6) - If Breastfeeding:
- Onesies (4) - Breast Pump (1)*
- Terry Cloth Sleepers (4) - Breast Pads (4)
- Sleepers (4) - Nursing Pillow (1)*
- Sweaters (2) - Diapers: Estimate
- Gowns (6) using 10-12 disposable
diapers per day or
- Outfits (6) 15-20 cloth diapers
- Bibs (6) and 3-5 pairs of rubber
- Socks or Booties (8) pants per day
- Hats or Bonnets (2) - Cloth diapers for burp
- Diaper Bag (1)* pads (2 dozen)*
- Diaper Pail (1)*
- Crib Sheets (3) - Baby Wipes
- Mattress Pads (2)
- Waterproof Soaker
- Receiving Blankets (2)

Some families may prefer to stock up on more linens and clothes to keep from doing laundry so often. There will be a lot of laundry, even if you are using disposable diapers!

Ask stores if they offer discounts for multiples!

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**Booklets**

**Placement of Multiple Birth Children in School**
Most current and relevant information for parents and educators on the placement of multiples in school.  
$7.00

**Bereavement**
A guide of support for those facing the death of a child, including loss of a multiple, loss in early pregnancy, children’s reactions to death.  
$7.00

**Higher Order Multiples**
Information specific for raising higher order multiples. Includes prenatal care, delivery, infancy and early years. Printed through a grant from the GERBER FOUNDATION. Booklet is Free with $2.00 shipping cost

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**Multiples of America’s**  
**Notebook** is the official magazine of Multiples of America. This award-winning quarterly publication is filled with articles pertaining to the special aspects of parenting multiple birth children.  
It contains articles for parents, relatives, caregivers, educators, and health care providers. Members of Multiples of America receive Notebook as a benefit of their membership. Visit our online Welcome Center to become a member of Multiples of America and review your copy today!

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Please visit our website to purchase resources related to multiples.  

www.multiplesofamerica.org

For questions, please email us at info@multiplesofamerica.org
Many new parents are concerned about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) happening to their newborn babies. This is a devastating occurrence in which the infant is found not breathing, usually after sleep. Since it is a rare occurrence, it is difficult to study but the causes are constantly being sought.

One theory is that some babies may have problems with arousal from sleep, especially very immature babies. When the baby is in a deep sleep and in a position that may be dangerous, such as against a pillow or soft object or on his/her stomach, the baby may not awaken easily when the airway becomes compromised and may suffocate.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has produced some guidelines to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. These were developed by a special task force on SIDS. Although the actual cause of SIDS is still unknown, statistics were compiled from several studies that showed lowered numbers of SIDS cases when these guidelines were followed.

Some of the strategies in these guidelines may help to prevent very deep sleep, which is currently thought to be one of the causes of SIDS. Please note that these are guidelines only and causation between various activities and SIDS has not been proven. They are given only as recommendations to reduce the risk of SIDS.

The guidelines are as follows:

- Put infants to sleep on their backs. Side sleeping or stomach sleeping are not recommended nor are any props to hold infants in certain positions.
- Give babies a pacifier when sleeping on their backs, especially in the SIDS-prone months of 2-6 months of age. Do not dip the pacifiers in any substance, especially sugary substances. If breastfeeding, wait until the baby is two months old and breastfeeding is well established.
- Infants should sleep in their own beds, but should be in the parent’s room.
- Use firm mattresses with fitted sheets and avoid comforters, fluffy bedding, lambskin, pillows, stuffed toys and bumper pads.
SUPPORT—An inclusive national membership organization that provides support for all people connected with the work of raising multiples—by providing practical information and opportunities to network with others who share in the joys and challenges.

EDUCATION + RESEARCH—A national leader in educating all people connected with the work of raising multiples by providing access to the best information and advocating for additional research in the field.

FRIENDSHIP + COMMUNITY—An inclusive national membership organization that facilitates a community of people connected with the joys and challenges of raising multiples.

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A Capital Experience

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About Us...

Multiples of America also known as The National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. is a support group for parents of twins and higher order multiples. We are a network of local clubs throughout the nation whose basic purposes are research and education. Multiples of America is non-profit, funded by dues, donations and grants. In addition to providing club development information, Multiples of America cooperates with qualified researchers, conducts organizational research, serves as a clearing house of educational information, and hosts an annual convention.

The Executive Office of Multiples of America is the focal point for referrals, research, membership, publicity, and educational information. With the exception of this office staff, Multiples of America workers are volunteers from local clubs.

Multiples of America publishes a quarterly magazine, Multiples of America’s Notebook. Individual members of local chapters and individual affiliate members receive Multiples of America’s Notebook. (Nonmember subscriptions are also available.) This award-winning magazine contains articles about parents of multiples and their children, parenting tips, summaries of organizational research studies, book reviews, and items of club interest. Booklets on multiple-specific topics are also available.

Multiples of America disseminates information specific to multiple birth families to a worldwide audience through its award winning website, www.multiplesofamerica.org.

This website includes a current bibliography of multiple-related literature, information specific to expectant parents of multiples, membership information, and much more.

Multiples of America provides a support services program geared to individual concerns. This program particularly benefits those needing support that may not be available locally. The Special Needs Coordinator aids parents who have children with disabilities or illnesses, and also assists adults who may themselves have disabilities which impact their parenting skills. A Bereavement Support outreach program assists parents who experience the loss of one or more of their multiples. The Single Parent outreach offers widowed, divorced, and never-married parents opportunities to share information. The Higher Order Multiples program offers support to parents of triplets, quadruplets, and more. The LGBT Support Coordinator provides support to all parents in the LGBT community.

Multiples of America is continuously updating its Multiple Birth Data Base, an information registry containing data about thousands of multiple birth sets. The information in the data base, used only with permission of participants, is available for qualified medical and educational researchers.

You can become a member of Multiples of America by contacting your local club. If there is no club in your area, you may want to consider an Individual Affiliate membership. Please contact the Executive Office for more information, or check out the Multiples of America website: www.multiplesofamerica.org.

Choosing A Stroller For Your Multiples

There is no perfect stroller for all multiples. Families must decide which features are most important for their use. When shopping, consider this:

- Most strollers are constructed for babies four months or older.
- Look for strength. After all, it must carry two or more children.
- Look for larger wheels for a more comfortable ride.
- Consider sacrificing economy to gain safety, comfort, and durability. Parents of multiples tend to use strollers longer than parents of single-born children.
- Consider the weight of the stroller and the ease of loading it into a van or car.

Types of Strollers

- Convertible carriage/stroller: For small babies, not as convenient for toddlers.
- Side-by-side: A separate area for each baby. Size is twice as wide as single stroller. May not fit through aisles or doorways.
- Tandem: Face-to-face seating, sharing leg room, or one in front of the other. Narrow enough to easily navigate through doorways.

Also check with local clubs as many sponsor used equipment sales.

Disclaimer

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