



Twins and Breastfeeding

Prematurity is common

- Twins are often born prematurely, and there are specific tips for breastfeeding 34-38 week gestation babies discussed elsewhere.
- Breastfeeding one premature baby can be difficult, so if there are two or more of them, nursing can be quite hectic.
- If you are expecting twins, mentally prepare yourself for this challenge, and then things will work out better than expected!
- Support from a lactation specialist is often needed, and asking for help sooner is better than later.
- Premature babies are sometimes unable to latch right away and/or remove adequate milk from the breast in the early days.
- Prematurity is a risk factor for low milk supply, and mothers of twins ultimately need even more milk!
- Without intervention, these babies may not gain weight well, and thus lack energy and stamina to progress towards exclusive nursing.

Tandem Nursing

- Tandem nursing is the goal, which means both babies are nursed at the same time.
- However, many babies, especially when premature, will require both of your hands to get properly positioned and latched, and then will need support to stay latched, awake and feeding.
- Once both babies prove they can get latched and stay latched with less assistance and get their jobs done, you can then nurse them “in tandem.”
- If your milk supply meets the demands of 2 babies to gain adequate weight, then exclusive tandem nursing will be your norm!
- Until then, a modified Triple Feeding Twins Regimen is recommended.
- This regimen will assess milk supply and baby’s ability to remove milk, PLUS increase the supply and promote weight gain and thus energy to nurse.
- This feeding regimen is individualized and progress is monitored via logging episodes of nursing, pumping and supplementing.

“Triple” Feeding twins is more than 3 steps!

Refer to the triple feeding instructions described elsewhere for details about this feeding regimen.

To follow are instructions to adapt the regimen to twins.

- This feeding regimen is intended to assess milk supply and assess baby’s ability to remove milk,
- PLUS increase the supply and promote weight gain and thus more energy to nurse.

Both babies are fed every 3 hours or so, but they take turns at the breast.

1. Nurse one baby while your helper feeds the other baby a bottle.

- Try to empty the 1st breast and then offer the 2nd breast until no more swallowing sounds are heard with breast compressions.
- If premature, you may need to limit nursing sessions to 20-30 minutes to avoid feeding fatigue. Some premies don’t have stamina to spend so much time at the breast and then follow this with a supplemental feeding. Baby needs rest in order to grow and you need rest in order to produce milk and function.

2. After the nursing baby is finished nursing, your helper offers this baby milk from a bottle (even if sleeping) to top her off until she is full.

- Develop a system such that each baby gets similar amounts of breastmilk versus formula.

3. Pump both breasts to empty.

4. At the next feeding session, each baby does the opposite routine.

Hang in there!

- Make sure that both breasts receive similar stimulation from both babies, since one baby may nurse better than the other.
- When triple feeding is accomplished, it is still good to put baby skin-to-skin, and perhaps more latching, as this helps the breastfeeding process. As you are aware, though, there are only 24 hours in a day!
- As successes or set-backs are recognized, the regimen is adjusted accordingly, to work towards tandem feeding.
- Close follow up with regular weight checks are in order to avoid excessive weight loss, monitor for progressing jaundice, to help babies get “over the hump” and back to birth weight, and then continue gaining adequate weight.
- If this does not work out as planned, realize that breastfeeding does not have to be “all or nothing.” Success can always be re-defined and a modified long term feeding plan can be set-up that includes as much breastmilk and as much nursing as possible and feasible.
- You must accept any offers of help with house work, meals, errands, etc.
- Your time and energy will be needed to feed your babies!