

Supporting Multiple Births Families through their Prenatal and Postnatal Experiences



Presented by
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Multiple Births Canada




Congratulations! You're having multiples!

- Sorry, what did you say?
- Are you serious? Are you joking?
- Let me see that!
- *stunned silence*
- *laughter*
- *tears*
- *laughter and tears*

REPEAT

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Introduction



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Incidence of multiple births

- The current rate of multiple births pregnancies is about 1 in 31.
- Approximately 1 in 82 births are twins.
- Approximately 1 in 6,400 births are triplets.
- Approximately 1 in 512,000 births are quadruplets.

Source: MBC Fact Sheet – Multiple Birth Facts and Figures

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People say the darndest things...

- * Are they natural or did you do fertility?
- * I have two kids 18 months apart. That's just like having twins.
- * You've got twins! Better you than me.
- * Double the trouble! 😊



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Today we will focus on setting up families for success

- * Common questions and concerns expectant parents of multiples have
- * Handling difficult conversations and supporting parents through a challenging pregnancy or delivery
- * Follow up - What do I need to do as a professional to ensure my patients/clients have received the support they need?


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Introduction to Multiple Births Canada

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!
Canada's multiple birth community is here to support you.

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for multiple birth individuals and their families in Canada.

We fulfill our mission by providing support, education, research, and advocacy both nationally and internationally to individuals, families, Chapters, and organizations that have a personal or professional interest in multiple birth issues.



SUPPORT NETWORKS:
 - National Multiple Births Association
 - Ontario Multiple Births Association
 - Quebec Multiple Births Association
 - Alberta Multiple Births Association
 - Saskatchewan Multiple Births Association
 - British Columbia Multiple Births Association
 - Atlantic Multiple Births Association

RESOURCES:
 - Multiple Births Canada
 - Local multiple birth chapters
 - Online support groups
 - Multiple Births Canada website
 - Multiple Births Canada newsletter

OUR MISSION:
 Improve the quality of life for multiple birth individuals and their families in Canada.


JOIN US NOW!

MULTIPLEBIRTHSCANADA.ORG | TOLL FREE: 1-866-228-8824

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Chapters throughout Canada


- Prince George Parents of Twins and Triplets Association
- Twins, Triplets & More Association of Calgary
- Edmonton Twin & Triplet Club
- Saskatoon Parents of Twins & Triplets Organization
- Bruce County - Multiples in Bruce
- Durham Parents of Multiples
- Multiple Births Guelph-Wellington
- Kitchener-Waterloo POMBA
- London Multiple Births Association
- Multiple Birth Families Association of Ottawa/Gatineau
- Sudbury - Greater Sudbury Multiple Births Association
- Temiskaming Multiple Births
- Windsor/Essex County POMBA
- Fredericton Area Moms of Multiples
- POMBA - Halifax
- Newfoundland & Labrador Multiple Births Association



<http://multiplebirthscanada.org/index.php/about-us/chapters/>


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Common Questions and Concerns



- * Can we afford this?
- * What do we need to purchase?
- * How can I care for more than one baby?
- * Is it possible to breastfeed multiples?
- * Are there any risks?
- * Where can I find information and support?

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Can we afford this? 

We're going to need a bigger car!

Is our house big enough?

Double the diapers – 20 to 24 a day?!

Two kids in daycare at the same time...



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How can you help?

Diapers, clothing and common baby/early childhood products...

Consider directing expectant/new multiple births families to their local Multiple Births Canada affiliate chapter or a local multiple births support group. They often have diaper coupons, samples available to hand out. Clothing and childhood gear can be found at second hand sales.

Some baby product companies and stores offer packages or discounts for multiple births families. Example: diapers, buy one get one twin discounts, etcetera.

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How can you help?

Daycare...

Median costs for infant care in Toronto, which equal \$1,736 a month, are noticeably higher than they are in second-place Newfoundland and Labrador which still charges a hefty \$1,400.

(Source: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/daycare-costs-1.335868>)

\$3,472 per month for infant twins to attend daycare.

Average annual income (2011) for a female worker \$32,100

(Source: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/laboro1a-eng.htm>)

Average annual cost of daycare for infant twins (under 16 months):

\$41,664

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How can you help?

Ensure you direct expectant multiple births parents to the best resources in your community for information on federal tax credits, services and subsidies in your community.

Do not assume families will discover this information on their own.

Example: Child Care Subsidy can be an immense support to a multiple births family.

Details on various tax credits and subsidies can be found here: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/child-care-subsidies>

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What do we need to purchase?

The Priorities

- * Car seats
- * Stroller to fit multiples + possible older siblings
- * Bassinets or cribs
- * A quality double electric breast pump for those who plan to try breastfeeding or feeding exclusive breast milk diet

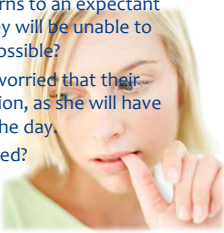
Please refer expectant parents of multiples to **Multiple Births Canada** as soon as possible in order for families to get helpful advice in the early stages of pregnancy.

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How can I care for more than one baby?

- * One of the most worrisome concerns to an expectant parent of multiples is they fear they will be unable to care for twins or more. How is it possible?
- * Mothers may become anxious or worried that their babies will receive too little attention, as she will have to juggle their needs throughout the day.
- * How can these worries be addressed?



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How can I care for more than one baby?

Suggestions...

- Set realistic expectations from the start.
- Set up your home to optimize time spent with babies and to keep babies close by. For example: set up bassinets/playpen in area of home you will spend most time and have change station close by.
- Understand that the first few weeks will be most challenging, parents should communicate and support each other through this learning process.
- Build a support network – meet other families with multiples, get to know neighbours and figure out which family and friends will be able to assist if needed. Don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Prepare big batch meals to store in fridge and freezer, in order to cut down time spent on every day meal preparation. Ask friends/family to drop off prepared meals/freezer meals.
- If affordable, hire a housekeeper to help once or twice a month, consider hiring a prenatal and postnatal doula to support needs.

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Is it possible to breastfeed multiples?

- * Should a mother wish to breastfeed, to be successful she will need a supportive partner, she will need to know it does not come easy for everyone, and that should she need information or advice she will need to feel comfortable asking for it. Health care practitioners and community workers should be their greatest cheerleaders.
- * Provide fact sheets on breastfeeding, as well as informational handouts about where to find breastfeeding support in their own community.
- * Multiple Births Canada offers a breastfeeding support network for mothers and fathers of multiples.
- * **Most importantly: Set reasonable expectations for herself. She is a mother of multiples after all.**

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Are there any risks?

- * Approximately 56% of twin pregnancies end in preterm birth and the statistics increase with higher order multiples.

Many people don't realize the connection between multiple births and preterm birth. It is important to ensure expectant parents are informed of the possibility and to be aware of the symptoms and what to do should they suspect preterm labour.

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Are there any risks?

Symptoms of Preterm Labour:

- * Menstrual-like cramps (come and go, above pelvic bone)
- * Low, dull backache
- * Pressure
- * Abdominal cramping (may feel need to use washroom)
- * Increase in vaginal discharge or blood
- * Feeling unwell
- * Headache
- * General feeling "something is not right"

It's a great idea to ensure mothers, partners and family are aware of these symptoms.

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Are there any risks?

- * Monoamniotic/Monochorionic (share placenta/2 cords) causing a risk for entanglement and possible loss of one or both babies
- * Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS)
- * Discordant growth

These conditions only occur in multiple births pregnancies and are an important reason to ensure an expectant mother begins receiving ultrasounds prior to the standard 18 weeks assessment.

Early detection of such conditions is key and can mean life or death for the babies.

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Where can I find information and support?



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Naissances multiples
C A N A D A



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office@multiplebirthscanada.org
<https://www.facebook.com/MultipleBirthsCanada/>
[@multiple_births](https://twitter.com/multiple_births)

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Handling difficult conversations and supporting parents through a challenging pregnancy or delivery

About 1 to 2 % of monochorionic multiples are monochorionic/monoamniotic, meaning the babies are at risk of cord entanglement. These babies require close monitoring and are often delivered at or before 32 weeks' gestation.

What may start out as excitement, can turn into fear or dreading the scary possibilities. Families need support during this time.

- * Consider referring the family to MBC right away
- * Consider finding a past "mo-mo" family you have worked with and connecting them to a new family for peer support
- * Ensure they have accurate information
- * Possibly involve a social worker to assist family with understanding the condition, process and any concerns that may arise.

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Handling difficult conversations and supporting parents through a challenging pregnancy or delivery

Loss

"It was not something we ever would have imagined at the time of learning that we were expecting twin babies, and everything became "twos". Yet for so many of us, because of the high risks in pregnancy and birth, it is the way it turned out: we have one to care for and raise while missing and mourning for his or her twin. We experience all the realities of becoming a parent at the very same time as all the realities of becoming a bereaved parent, and all in one package. Not this year and next year, but all at once now, and "my twins". We grieve for our baby and for our twins being together, and we worry about the impacts on our survivor. It is often a deeply sad, confusing, and physically and emotionally exhausting time. We're the last ones who need to be told to be grateful when a baby lives – yet finding joy in our survivor can be a huge challenge, for so many reasons, even though we need and want to all the more, and want our child to be happy."

- Center for Loss in Multiple Birth, Inc.

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Handling difficult conversations and supporting parents through a challenging pregnancy or delivery

Loss

There are many reasons why a loss of a multiple baby or babies may occur. Help parents through their grief by ensuring they have support and information immediately.

Where to look for direction and support:

Multiple Births Canada offers a private Loss Support Network

Center for Loss in Multiple Birth, Inc.

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Network at Sunnybrook

Forever Angels (blog written by Lynda Haddon)

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Follow up - What do I need to do as a professional to ensure my patients/clients have received the support they need?

- * Follow up appointments or telephone calls to touch base – whether you are a physician or midwife carrying out a 6 week check up or a social worker from the hospital
- * Ensure multiple births moms/dads have access to information about Postpartum Depression/Anxiety and mental health supports available in your area. MBC also offers a PPD/Anxiety Support Network. Multiples mothers are at greater risk to develop PPD/Anxiety.



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Follow up - What do I need to do as a professional to ensure my patients/clients have received the support they need?

- * If the babies were born preterm, ask about them, ask if the family has connected with local public health or social services to ensure the babies are being monitored.
- * Provide information about local child development centres, in the event parents need to refer to them in the first year.
- * Check on the “health” of the parental relationship. Families never really know how they will respond to the stress of having multiple births babies home and those first few weeks are challenging!



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Follow up - What do I need to do as a professional to ensure my patients/clients have received the support they need?

- * Ensure families are reminded of Multiple Births Canada and local multiple births groups.
- * Refer parents to places such as Ontario Early Years Centres for additional socialization and interaction with new parents.
- * Help families and in particular mothers, avoid too much isolation during that first year.

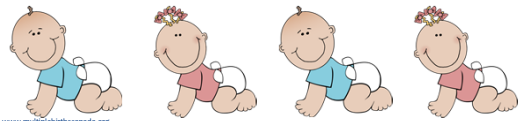
It takes a village...



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For more information on multiples:

- * www.multiplebirthscanada.org
- * <https://www.tamba.org.uk/?tab=1>
- * <http://www.multiplesofamerica.org/>



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Thank You.
Questions?



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