



Going Home with Two or More

When the day finally arrives and you head home with your babies, one journey has ended and another has begun. Congratulations and welcome to parenthood—with multiples!

It will be with great joy that you head for home with your babies for the first time. You can achieve the smoothest transition to having your babies at home if you plan ahead. We encourage you to seek help, to consider breastfeeding, and to set up your home before your babies arrive.

Parents often recall, even years later, that the postpartum period with newborn twins or multiples at home was the most difficult and challenging time of their lives. This is not to dismiss the joy that comes with bringing home newborn infants. However, without lots of extra support and help around the clock, exhaustion can quickly overtake a household, as a family copes with the reality of feeding, burping, changing, dressing, bathing, comforting, stimulating, and loving more than one baby.

Seek Help

Accept any and all offers of help from capable and willing friends and family. This doesn't mean that you leave your precious newborns in a family member's lone care, but instead that you ask them to change one diaper while you change another, or that you ask them to do the laundry or fix dinner (or five batches of dinner to put away in the freezer!). Perhaps a friend or family member could do one of the night feedings so that you can sleep uninterrupted for 5 or 6 hours. Parents often report the first six months as the most challenging when parenting multiples. We encourage you to seek and accept help during these early parenting months.



Consider Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding may be challenging at first, but many mothers of twins feel that it is easier than bottle feeding in the long run. The benefits of breastfeeding include:

- It is the best source of nutrition for your babies.
- It encourages bonding.
- Studies show a decreased rate of illness (fewer doctor, clinic and drug store visits).
- The source of milk is always clean, warm and available.
- You can feed two infants at the same time!
- It is a huge cost savings over buying formula.
- There is no need to wash and prepare bottles.
- Pumping breast milk and having a friend or family member feed the babies breast milk in a bottle is always an option (especially at 3:00 a.m.!).

Many breastfeeding mothers wonder, “Will I be able to make enough milk for more than one baby?”

Research has shown that the average milk yield for a mother of a single baby at age 6 months is 32 oz., while a mother with twins yields 67 oz. and a mother with triplets yields 103 oz. Help from a lactation consultant may be needed when you start, especially if your babies are born preterm. Most women can be successful with breastfeeding their babies and often find it to be quite satisfying for both mom and babies.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call us if you have questions or concerns.

Perinatal Education
(206) 598-4003

Maternity & Infant Center
(206) 598-4600

Lactation Services
(206) 598-4628

Set Up Your Home

Your home needs to adjust to the coming arrival of two or more newborns. Many aspects of your household will be affected.

Finances: Look at your priorities. Can you cut back somewhere to make life easier in another area? Can you find any extra funds in your budget to hire a housekeeper for the first year?

Food: Consider buying a large freezer and buying in bulk. Fill your freezer before the babies come with lots of read-made meals, prepared at home or from the grocery store. Welcome offers of dinner from friends and family. Plan to give up on fancy meal preparation during the first year.

Safety: Baby proof your home before the birth of your babies. You won't have time later!

Nesting: Set up a "nest" on each floor or living area of your home which includes a diaper supply and hamper and a cooler with cold drinks and snacks (refill daily). This will save countless extra steps during each day.

Laundry: Consider buying an extra large size washer and dryer. Have a laundry basket or hamper in each "nest" area and collect all the laundry at once. Accept offers of help from friends and family and include doing the laundry as one of the tasks.

Equipment: Finances often become tight after the birth of multiples, but these items can make life much easier in the first year.

- a crib for each baby
- two (or more) battery-operated swings
- two (or more) bouncer seats
- two baby backpacks
- a double (or triple) stroller
- a double bike trailer/stroller combo
- gates
- playpens
- a cordless phone.

Planning ahead can ease your transition as you head home with your babies for the first time. Congratulations and welcome to parenthood—with multiples!



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