



Will My Babies Be Identical?

Questions?

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

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Many parents want to know during their pregnancy if their babies are identical or fraternal. This is an important question to ask your care provider, not just to satisfy your curiosity, but because it affects your pregnancy.

“Fraternal” twins are not identical and are called “dizygotic” because two separate eggs are fertilized by two separate sperm. This results in siblings that just happen to be in the uterus at the same time. They can be the same sex or opposite sexes.

“Identical” twins are called “monozygotic” because a single fertilized egg splits into two. This means the babies are genetically identical and are always the same sex. Triplets or more are usually fraternal.

Fraternal babies always have their own amniotic sac and their own placenta, although sometimes the placentas can become fused during pregnancy because they are so close together. The placentas of fraternal babies do not have blood vessels that “communicate” or share blood.

Identical babies usually have their own amniotic sac, but can either have their own placenta or share one placenta. Concerns arise when identical babies share a placenta or have communicating vessels between their placentas, since one baby can receive too much blood flow while another baby receives too little. Another rare problem happens when identical babies are both in the same sac because their bodies and cords can become entangled.

Your care provider can usually tell you during your pregnancy whether you have fraternal or identical babies. Sometimes an analysis of the placenta or placentas after birth can tell whether your babies are fraternal or identical. And sometimes genetic testing on your growing children is the only way to know for sure.



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