

How do I feed my twins, triplets or more?

This is a common question among expectant and new mums of multiples, along with, will I make enough milk? If you want to breastfeed your babies then don't be put off by the challenges and questions. Rather, prepare and read up on it as much as possible before your babies arrive, and be sure to get lots of support from professionals and other mothers of multiples – once your babies are here.

The [Multiple Births Foundation](#) (2011) outlined five different approaches to feeding multiple babies:

1. Breastfeeding - this is the optimal form of nutrition for babies and has many health benefits for both mother and babies.
2. Mother's own expressed breastmilk - this allows babies to receive breastmilk via a tube, bottle or cup. It also allows babies to be given breastmilk by other people.
3. Donor breastmilk - this is an alternative source of breastmilk when milk from the infant's mother is unavailable or in short supply. Breastmilk from carefully screened donors is pasteurised, frozen and

defrosted when needed, and given to the baby via a tube, bottle or cup.

4. Formula feeding
5. Mixed feeding - i.e. different combinations of the above.

Whatever choice you make, there is absolutely no room in the multiples world for beating yourself up about it. Find whatever works for your family, and concentrate on enjoying your babies.

Whichever of these approaches you choose, one of the things I really struggled with was how to coordinate feeding my babies. TAMBA suggested there are four basic methods:

1. Follow your babies' cues - feed each baby, as and when they seem hungry.
2. Feed each baby (either individually or together) to a strict timetable. This sounds outdated but may be necessary in the early days, especially if your babies are very premature or small. However you will need to make sure that the routine allows your babies to feed often enough to get enough milk.

3. If one baby wakes up for a feed, feed that baby, then wake the other baby for a feed.

4. If one baby wakes up for a feed, wake the other(s) and feed all the babies at once.

Most people find that a routine of some sort helps to prevent the babies becoming out of synch with each other – which could result in you feeding one or other of them all day long.



My story

Anita Rapson

I always planned on breastfeeding, although if truth be told, I hadn't given it much thought, just assuming that my body would naturally be able to feed my babies. I had a c-section at 37.6 weeks and my beautiful girls were born weighing 3.0kg and 2.7kg. But do you think I could produce anything more than a drip of colostrum. My memories of my six days in hospital is being permanently attached to the double breast pump. We asked the hospital for formula to top-up, but the nurses made me feel like it was the WORST decision I could possibly be making. All I wanted to do was feed my babies. And go home.

Eventually, of course, we did get home. But we didn't have any formula in the house and live rurally, so breastfeeding it was and over the next few days my milk came in.

I promptly ordered a breast pump and duly pumped for what felt like every day, all day. To say I disliked it, is an understatement, especially as we never got our girls to regularly take a bottle. So after a few weeks I stopped using the breast pump.

But I really struggled with breastfeeding, especially tandem feeding. Matt was back on the farm soon after we got home and I recall sitting in the house, tears streaming down my face with two screaming babies, one whom I couldn't latch on and the other because she had to wait. It tore me up. I asked for help - I contacted our local La Leche League lady, my midwife, who also arranged for another midwife visit me, PlunketLine, my Plunket nurse, my mum, my Mother-in-Law, other local mums of twins. None of this really helped, except to ensure I lost even more confidence.

So, in tears (again) I contacted the hospital and the lactation consultant came to visit me. I can't remember exactly what she said, but she spent some time with us and I remember her as being very helpful - and reassured me that I could do it and gave me some real practical suggestions, including putting down the expensive tandem feeding cushion and going back to my normal tri-pillow and changing couches. She also pointed out that as my babies grew, our approach to breastfeeding would change too. Just a few of these suggestions - and as Ada and Hazel got older, eventually we got into the swing of things. And I continued to feed them until they were 16 months, starting solids around 5 months.

More information on feeding multiples

- Download the BreastFedNZ app (www.breastfednz.co.nz)
- Breastfeeding twins & triplets (pamphlet produced by HealthInfo): www.healthinfo.org.nz/patientinfo/67935.pdf
- Twins and More blog: www.twinsandmore.co.nz/blog/breastfeeding-twins-your-milk-supply/
- La Leche League - nursing multiples: www.lalecheleague.org/nb/nbmultiples.html
- Multiples NZ feeding page, including links to previous Multiples Matters articles: www.multiples.org.nz/index.php/2013-04-27-01-23-47/breastfeeding
- KellyMom - breastfeeding multiples: www.kellymom.com/ages/newborn/bf-basics/bf-links-multiples/
- Twin pregnancy and beyond: www.twin-pregnancy-and-beyond.com/breastfeeding-twins.html
- Huggies, breastfeeding twins: www.huggies.co.nz/childbirth/multiple-births/twins/breastfeeding
- TAMBA (Twins and Multiples Birth Association, UK), includes some videos: www.tamba.org.uk/parenting/first-year/feeding
- And, of course, the Multiples Bay of Plenty Facebook group, Twin Treasures Support NZ (www.facebook.com/groups/174488538903/) or Multiples NZ (www.facebook.com/groups/multiplesnz/).

Lactation Boosting Cookies

A tasty recipe that may also help to improve the quality and supply of breast milk. If you have 2-3 smallish ones a day it balances out supply, but if you want to eat more, then enjoy! Makes 50+.

Ingredients

1 cup of butter or margarine
 1 cup sugar
 1 cup brown sugar
 4 tablespoons of water
 2 tablespoons of ground linseed (or flaxseed)
 2 large eggs
 1 teaspoon of vanilla essence
 2 cups flour
 1 teaspoon of baking soda
 1 teaspoon of salt
 3 cups of oats, thick cut or wholegrain if you can get them
 1 cup (or more!) of chocolate chips
 2 tablespoons of brewer's yeast, be generous (brewer's yeast, not baker's yeast)

Directions

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Line a baking sheet with baking paper. Mix together the ground linseed and water, then set aside for 3-5 minutes. Cream the butter and the sugar. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing well. Stir the linseed mixture and add with vanilla essence to the butter/sugar mix. Beat until blended.

Sift together the dry ingredients EXCEPT the oats and chocolate chips, then add to the butter mix. Stir in the oats and chocolate chips. Scoop onto the baking sheet and bake each batch for 8-12 minutes, depending on the size of the cookies.

From www.neonataltrust.org.nz/lactation%20cookies



CONNECT is a coffee and playgroup for mothers with or expecting multiples. It's a time to meet new people, to build relationships, to support one another and to get support from others on the journey of life with multiples, all while enjoying a cuppa and letting the kids make new friends and play.

CONNECT meets on the first and third Monday of each month from 10 am until 12 midday. Every two sessions will be at the Plunket rooms in Otumoetai and every third session will change venue, either in Te Puke, Katikati, or the Mount.

UPCOMING DATES:

Oct 3rd: Otumoetai Plunket rooms
 Oct 17th: Fairhaven Park, Te Puke
 Nov 7th: Otumoetai Plunket rooms
 Nov 21st: Otumoetai Plunket rooms
 Dec 5th: Katikati, to be confirmed
 Dec 19th: Otumoetai Plunket rooms

LOCATION:

The Otumoetai Plunket Rooms are located at 59 Otumoetai Road.

We post reminders on the Multiples Bay of Plenty Facebook page and the full events calendar is published on our website.

Tea and coffee are provided - just bring along morning tea for your little ones and siblings.

Looking forward to seeing you there and remember **everyone** is welcome, including siblings.

We are lucky to have at our fingertips some entertaining, honest, wonderful blogs written by New Zealand mothers of twins! Here are extracts from three bloggers sharing their stories about feeding their babies...

Thanks for the Mammaries

Jacquelyn Collins - May 13, 2013



Given how much of my time and energy is spent feeding Hattie and Joe, I thought that I should write a post to talk about how we've been getting on. I last wrote about feeding in late January, when the babies were nearly two weeks old. I wrote primarily about my realisation that, despite my pre-birth pragmatism regarding breast feeding, I'd realised how important it was to me to be able to feed my children - I hadn't anticipated that breast feeding would be such a good bonding experience. I also wrote about being happy that both babies had learned to latch on so easily, and I mentioned that I was supplementing with formula.

For the avoidance of doubt, what follows is entirely my own breast feeding 'journey': it is not designed to in any way suggest that breast is best, or any of that lactivist nonsense – as long as a baby is being fed, that baby is going to do well, and no mother should feel any pressure to breast feed – indeed, mothers should do it for a day, a week, a month, a year, or not at all: it is entirely their business. Like I said in my earlier breast feeding post, if you're not the one holding the yowling baby at 2 am you have absolutely no right to an opinion, as far as I'm concerned. I'm writing this post primarily because I've been told that some people can't fathom what it must be like to feed two babies, or even imagine that it's possible, so I thought it might be interesting to lift the curtain on it, so to speak...

Read more... and check out Jacquelyn's blog at <https://knockedupjacq.wordpress.com>

Double Trouble: Breastfeeding Twins

Julie Scherer - November 20, 2015



Yesterday at 4am the now oh so familiar sound of "whoo-phew, whoo-phew, whoo-phew, ..." suddenly changed its tune to "whoo-brrrrrrrrrrr-silence". My double breast pump just died.

In the six weeks since I gave birth to my twins, the breast pump has become my constant companion. It does take some of the joy out of breastfeeding but as a mum of premature twins it's absolutely necessary, just as it is for other mums for different reasons.

A breast pump is one of those weird pieces of equipment that you've likely never thought about before and then end up strapped to for hours and hours of your life. When mine broke down in the middle of the night I panicked a bit as I have to express milk every four hours to feed my babies. But thanks to the wonderful mums in the Wellington Multiple Birth Club, all it took was one shout out for help via Facebook and I had a new one by midday.

But what is it about using that awful contraption that makes you feel like a prized cow? For a lot of new mums breastfeeding doesn't come easily. Although it seems like it should be the most natural thing, it's much trickier than just shoving your wee baby on your boob. Breastfeeding premature twins is even more of a challenge.

My two daughters were born at 34 weeks and although they were healthy as they could be, they were too weak to feed directly from the breast. Premature babies need lots of sleep to grow and develop, and they tire easily...

Read more... This blog first appeared on stuff.co.nz. Check out Jule's blog: www.facebook.com/JuleBlogs

Boobs, boobs, books

Anna Reeve - September 20, 2016



I have had quite a few requests for a blog on my experiences breast feeding and since I like to please, here it is. One thing we need to cover off before I get into the nitty gritty of breast feeding, is I have implants. Not a secret, it's been written about in magazines before, talked about on TV in a really embarrassing reality tv show I did when I was in my early 20's, but I haven't talked about it recently. Since the Nuggets have arrived I have a new group of followers/readers and you probably weren't aware. For the people who knew I had them, that's usually their first questions when we talk about breast feeding. How did you breast feed when you have implants?

It's one of the biggest misconceptions about implants out there, that it means you won't be able to breast feed. My doctor assured me then, as I always knew I would want to breast feed, that unless I wasn't naturally able to breast feed myself, then the placement of my implants would not affect that. It's funny how so many people instantly think it's a write off, even my OB was worried I wouldn't be able to feed.

Anyway I digress...when I first was pregnant I knew I would want to feed and was aiming for a year. When we found out we were having twins I still wanted to feed but knew it would be a tougher journey.

Fast forward 34 weeks and the nuggets made their early entry into the world...

Read more... and check out Anna's
blog: www.annareeve.co.nz