

# BREASTFEEDING MULTIPLES

Breastfeeding twins, triplets or more is possible! Many mothers of multiples have breastfed their babies well into toddlerhood.

## Breastfeeding multiples is important

- Breastfeeding is the normal way to feed infants and young children and is very important to the health of families and communities
- Multiple birth babies are more likely to be born small or prematurely which puts them at a higher risk of infection. Your milk is the best food for their special needs; it is easy to digest, supports growth and development and boosts their ability to fight infections

## What can I do to make breastfeeding multiples a success?

### 1. While pregnant

- Learn about breastfeeding during your pregnancy and what to expect in the first few weeks after giving birth
- Arrange for help from family and friends during the early weeks to help with housework, cooking, shopping and care of older children
- Multiples are often born early; learn about breastfeeding a premature or near-term baby and how to build and protect your milk supply
- Talk to mothers in your community who have breastfed multiples
- Visit [www.york.ca/breastfeeding](http://www.york.ca/breastfeeding) to learn about pregnancy and breastfeeding or call Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 to speak with a Public Health Registered Nurse

### 2. Get off to a good start

- Hold your babies skin-to-skin right after birth or as soon as possible. This helps your babies adjust to life outside the womb, encourages your babies to latch and feed at the breast and helps increase milk supply
- Breastfeed your babies within the first hour after birth when possible. If your babies are unable to breastfeed after birth hand express and feed them with a spoon or cup. Ask for help to learn this skill
- Continue to breastfeed and or express milk frequently
- Record feedings, wet and dirty diapers

### 3. Keep your babies close

- Keep your babies close to you so you can respond to their early feeding cues; making noises, stretching, bringing hands to mouth, smacking lips. Bring your babies to the breast every time you see these cues
- Hold your babies skin-to-skin as much as possible. If you need some help with this, you can have your partner hold the babies skin-to-skin. If your babies are under special care and not in the room with you, spend as much time as possible with them skin-to-skin

### 4. Know where to get help

- Ask for help while in the hospital. Your nurse or Lactation Consultant can help you get breastfeeding off to a great start and make a breastfeeding plan

## PUBLIC HEALTH

1-800-361-5653

TTY: 1-866-512-6228

[york.ca/breastfeeding](http://york.ca/breastfeeding)

## 5. Expressing your milk

- Express your milk by hand or pump if your babies are unable to breastfeed or they need more milk
- Use a high quality double electric pump. Your nurse can tell you where to rent or buy a pump. Remove milk often, even at night. Express a minimum of eight times in 24 hours

## 6. Take care of yourself

- Follow Canada's Food guide. Making milk for two or more babies often requires additional calories. Drink water regularly! Have a drink near you when breastfeeding
- Get plenty of rest. Have your family and friends support you by caring for the babies so that you can nap or rest

## Can I feed two babies at the same time?

Some mothers breastfeed one baby at a time while others breastfeed both babies at the same time (tandem feeding). Do what works best for you and your babies. Most mothers say that tandem feeding saves time and is a great way to spend time with both babies. You may need practice and support to learn to tandem feed multiples.

## Tandem feeding

- Find a comfortable position with your body supported
- Lean back, get comfortable and use pillows to help support you if needed
- If one baby is still learning to latch, let this baby latch first
- Make sure that each baby is feeding well by listening for swallows
- Compress or massage your breasts when swallows slow down
- Offer one breast to each baby per feed; switch breasts at the next feed

Double football



Football and cradle



Front cross



Upright latch



Breastfeeding is important for the health of you and your babies. York Region Public Health offers telephone support and free breastfeeding clinics. Call Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653, TTY 1-866-512-6228 or visit [york.ca/breastfeeding](http://york.ca/breastfeeding)