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# **GUIDE**

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## **Breastfeeding Twins**



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The Ottawa Hospital | L'Hôpital  
d'Ottawa



***Disclaimer***

*This is general information developed by The Ottawa Hospital. It is not intended to replace the advice of a qualified healthcare provider. Please consult your own personal physician who will be able to determine the appropriateness of the information for your specific situation.*

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# Breastfeeding Twins

Congratulations, you are the parent(s) of twins! Here are a few practical tips to help you be successful with breastfeeding.

## *Initiating Breastfeeding with Twins*

As soon as possible after birth, give your babies the opportunity to breastfeed, preferably within the first half hour. Breasts make milk by the amount of stimulation they get, so the more often your babies breastfeed, the more milk you will make. A good latch is very important, as you have two babies breastfeeding frequently, and you want to avoid sore nipples.

Start by getting into a comfortable position on a chair, a sofa or a bed. As you and your babies learn the skill of breastfeeding, it is often easiest to try breastfeeding each baby separately. As you and the babies get better at this new skill, many families choose to breastfeed both babies together, at least some of the time.

In the first few days it is not unusual for babies to be sleepy and require waking for feeds after 2 to 3 hours. Sometimes undressing your baby down to the diaper can help him stay awake at the breast.

Cup the breast with one hand keeping your fingers well back from the nipple to support your breast. With the other arm tuck your baby in close to you. Hold your babies head in that hand, but support it behind the neck. Bring the baby to the breast with his head tilted back and chin forward; this will bring the baby's bottom lip deep into the breast.

If you have a good latch:

- You will see the baby's mouth wide open
- You will see some areola (brown part around the nipple) above the top lip and less on the bottom
- The chin is deep into the breast
- The nipple will be comfortable.

You should let the baby stay at the breast as long as he is actively sucking. Most babies need to feed for 20 to 40 minutes, but watch your baby, not the clock. If your baby gets sleepy you can squeeze the breast firmly to help your milk flow and help the baby start sucking again. This is called breast compression. Do not squeeze so hard that it hurts. When the baby falls asleep or lets go of the breast, try to burp the baby. Many breastfed babies do not burp much; so don't worry if your babies don't burp, as long as they seem comfortable after feeding.

Whereas singleton babies attempt to feed on both breasts each feed, breastfed twins only get one breast per feeding. Most families choose to breastfeed the first baby on one breast and the second baby on the other breast alternating each feeding. Who feeds first or second is not a concern as long as they alternate breasts. Some families will choose to alternate breasts less often once breastfeeding is going well, but it is good to alternate every feed at the start.

## ***Positioning Your Babies at the Breast Alone and Together***

### **Alternate Arm Hold**



With one baby



With two babies

## Football Hold



With one baby

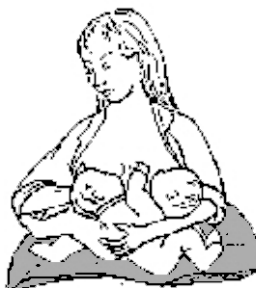


With two babies

## Cradle Hold



With one baby



With two babies

## Breastfeeding in Bed



With one baby



With two babies

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the Ottawa Public Health*

## ***Do I need to pump?***

If breastfeeding is going well for both babies you do not need to pump. If one or both babies is/are having difficulty with breastfeeding, and need(s) to have some extra feedings, it is recommended that you pump to stimulate your milk production and to have milk to offer to the bab(y)ies.

While in hospital we will provide a double electric pump for your use. Your nurse will show you how to use the pump and how to clean the pumping equipment. If you require a pump for home, the nurse will give you a list of locations to rent or purchase pumps.

## ***References:***

1. La Leche League Canada. (July, 1991). *Breastfeeding Twins* [Brochure]. Author.
2. City of Ottawa. (2003). *Breastfeeding Your Baby* [brochure], Ottawa, Ontario: Author.
3. Mohrbacher, N. and Stock, J. (2003). *The Breastfeeding Answer Book* (Third Revised ed.), Schaumburg, Illinois: La Leche League International.



