

I bet when you found out you were pregnant, you thought...

"I'm gunna need a crib, a bassinet, a car seat, and so much more!"

You probably **NEVER** thought...

"I'm gunna need two or three cribs... two or three bassinets... two or three car seats..."

"WAY BIGGER CLOTHES...!!!"

Pregnancy with Multiples is Different

You've probably figured out that your pregnancy will be different. It will likely be more intense than if you were carrying one baby. In general, there are three very important rules to follow when preparing for your multiple pregnancy:

1. **Work closely with your medical provider:** Listen to everything your provider suggests and don't miss any prenatal visits.
2. **Know that your pregnancy is special:** This is important! Your pregnancy is unique and needs special consideration. Even if you have other friends who are giving you advice, make certain that it still applies to you because you have multiple babies.
3. **Get a TON of Help!** Having a baby is a big deal. Having multiple babies is even bigger! You will want to start recruiting help right away.

1. Working With Your Medical Provider

One of the most important rules of thriving during a multiple pregnancy is to work closely with your provider. Your pregnancy will require some extra attention and care since you have more risk for complications. Look for a provider who has experience and training with a multiple pregnancy.

You'll likely see your provider:

1. Once a month up to around week 24
2. Every other week up to week 32
3. Then every week until birth.

Here are a few things to expect:

- Your health and the wellbeing of your babies will be closely watched.
- They will determine whether your babies share a placenta or amniotic sac, which will help determine your level of risk.
- They will determine whether the babies are identical, meaning they come from the same egg and will look a lot like each other, or fraternal, if they come from separate eggs.
- You may also have more frequent ultrasound exams starting in your second trimester.

Risks and Complications

Here are a few risks and complications your provider will be looking out for:

- **Pre-term labor** can lead to delivering your babies too early, which is the most common complication of a multiple pregnancy. So, it's really important that you follow your provider's instructions and let them know right away if you feel any early contractions.

FACT SHEET

- **Pregnancy-induced hypertension** is high blood pressure during pregnancy. See your provider if you experience constant headaches, swelling, sudden weight gain, blurred or double vision, and pain in the upper right side of your belly or around your stomach.
- **Preeclampsia** includes both high blood pressure and protein in the urine. If you begin to experience severe headaches, swelling, and rapid weight gain, see your provider immediately.
- **Gestational diabetes** is a condition where you have difficulty maintaining normal blood sugar levels during pregnancy.
- **Intense morning sickness** can lead to severe morning sickness. This can cause you to lose too much weight and be dehydrated.

2. Your Pregnancy is Special

The second rule to help you thrive is to understand that your pregnancy is special. What this means is that you may need to do things for you and your babies that not every pregnant woman has to do.

1. **Diet and Exercise.** Eating right and gaining enough weight is critical when you're carrying multiples. Your provider will advise you on the weight you should gain depending on your Body Mass Index (BMI) at the start of pregnancy. Make sure you eat a healthy diet that includes all food groups.

Getting out and moving is also important, but you'll need to avoid all high-impact and strenuous activities. If your provider approves, aim for 30 minutes a day doing things like walking, swimming, or stretching.

2. **Labor & Delivery.** Where you deliver your babies is important to consider. If you can, you may want to choose a hospital that has specialized care for premature infants, so if you do deliver prematurely, you'll be close to your babies.

3. Get a TON of Help!

The third rule of thriving during your multiple pregnancy is to get a ton of help. This is the time to call upon friends and family.

- Begin creating and scheduling your support team now.
- Join organizations that help new parents and parents of multiples. Look into Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) at www.mops.org and Multiples of America at www.multiplesofamerica.org for local chapters.
- Get help at the hospital. They have lactation specialists to help you learn how to breast feed multiple babies.
- There are things you're going to need to discuss with your boss, such as you'll likely need more breaks throughout the day as the babies grow, and you may miss work if your pregnancy is intense. You may also need to start your maternity leave earlier and extend it after you have the babies.

It's hard to ask for help. No one likes to do it. But you're going to need a lot of it to recover and adjust well to being a mom of multiples. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness or failing.

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