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July/August 2011



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Identical twins, Julia and Madeleine are from Houston, Texas and are 6-years-old. They both enjoy many activities like drawing, reading, swimming and playing at the beach and also they love playing with their younger sisters.

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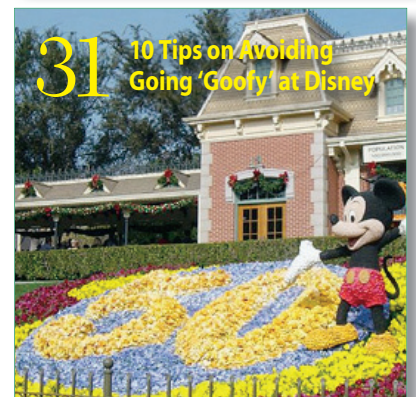
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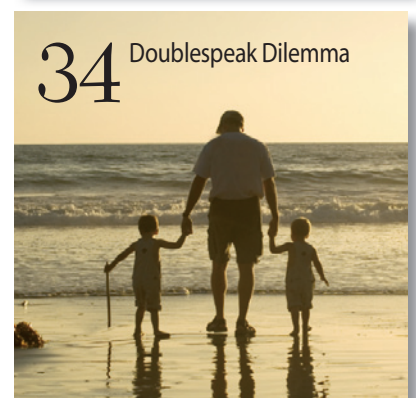
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My role as a "Cruise Director" this summer. . .

Its summer time and I try very hard to keep my four boys (*including twins*) active and busy while they are all home enjoying a three month break from school and the structured routine that goes along with all of that! During these months of supposed "relaxation" that should be filled with "lazy days" layered with stress-free, fun times with the family, I just don't get it. For some reason, my summer is the polar opposite of this description. If I were to just have a "lazy day" planned in my house it would only end up in constant bickering, fighting and a trip to the ER for sure.

Being the only female in the house with five boys (*I am including my husband in the mix*) takes skill, endurance and you must have a sense of humor to survive. I'm not going to lie, it's no easy task to stay pleasant and not lose my patience with all the boys when surrounded by testosterone, sports drinks and the smell of sweaty socks!

I often feel like a cruise director but on a sinking ship, bound for the bottom and somehow I stay afloat, bobbing up and down, trying to come up with fun activities they all will enjoy. The pressure can be intense and if you're not organized and ready to go, you may as well admit defeat... which consists of hearing "I'm bored" and "I have nothing to do" a few hundred times a day!

I know my situation is a bit unique and this all could quite possibly be due to the shear age spread of our boys (*our twins are 13 and my singletons are 8 and almost 4*) that I am in a

constant state of flux and movement verging on full-fledged insanity. In any given summer day, I have to bring t-ball snacks for 12 eight year olds, manage the 7th grade basketball

team, see my youngest sing at Vacation Bible School and then off to see my other teenage son in his theater camp flash mob all in a single bound. Back-n-forth and up and down between the pre-school world, school-age silliness and the ever exciting world of two boys going into puberty in stereo! Just typing this is tiring (whew!)

My husband thinks I should just slow down and not schedule so many activities for them because we have to run around so much but I disagree. Keeping them busy and active is well worth it and the benefits far outweigh the time and effort it takes on my part. It really does keep them out of trouble and they seem to get along better with each other when they have something else going on and the space from one another every once in awhile. I also understand that this is the season of my life right now and life won't always be this way so this too shall pass!

I always have to laugh when I hear about how other people enjoy their summer months... Relaxing on a hammock while reading their favorite book under a shady tree, sipping some flavored iced-tea and enjoying a warm summer breeze.... To me, that's more like a boring fantasy than reality when raising four active boys and something I can't even imagine. I truly love the hustle and bustle of parenting boys and I wouldn't change my situation for anything, I just wish I had a super cute 'Cruise Director' outfit that I could wear during the summer months to show off my extended role...Shopping anyone?

We hope you enjoy this issue filled with great information including a chart on important milestones for multiples, easing fears while pregnant, the benefits of pumping, how to get your picky toddlers to eat and an article about getting your multiples ready for pre-school. Our center feature is all about vacation hot spots this summer and other great ideas and information that sizzle. And have you ever been asked which one is the good twin and which one is bad? Then you will definitely want to read the feature article on crushing this classic twin myth! We hope you have an amazing summer and enjoy your children by taking some time to create family fun that they will remember for a lifetime and be sure to keep them busy!

Christa D Reed

Christa D. Reed
Editor-in-Chief



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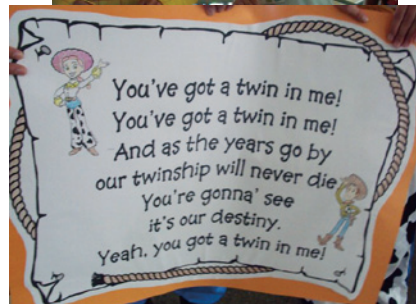
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NOMOTC's 51st National Convention is July 24-30, 2011 in Chicago



The Illinois Mothers of Twins Clubs invites all mothers of multiples to attend this year's annual national convention 'Sweet Home Chicago', July 24-30, 2011 at the Hilton Chicago Hotel. Numerous activities and tours are planned, along with networking opportunities, informative workshops and an exciting keynote presentation by Dave 'The Shef' Sheffield as he presents **How to Keep Your Head On...While Working Your Butt Off** an exciting, interactive program that will inspire and entertain attendees. To learn more about this year's convention visit the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc. (NOMOTCs) website at www.nomotc.org

36th Annual Twins Days Festival is August 5-7th in Twinsburg, Ohio



Twins Days takes place on the first full weekend of August each year. The Twins Days Festival is open to all multiples — identical, fraternal, young and old, twins, triplets, quads — and their families. While the Friday evening Welcome Wiener Roast is for **registered twins and their families only**, the festival grounds on Saturday and Sunday are **open to the public**. Admission to the grounds for the public, non-registered twins and families of registered twins is \$3.00/person per day. Public parking is available near the festival grounds for \$3.00/day, with regular shuttles run-

ning between the parking lots and the festival grounds.

The theme for this year's festival is everything 'Circus' so attendees are encouraged to dress in this theme. Other activities planned include a golf tournament, children's field games, inflatable bouncers, a 'Double Take' parade, twins' contests, group photos, a twins' talent show, a pancake breakfast, evening fireworks and a charity 5K race/walk. There is a food court and numerous

activities planned for the entire family. Want more information on registering and a complete festival schedule? Visit the Twins Days Festival website at: <http://www.twinsdays.org>

UT Southwestern specialists perform area's first fetal surgery to correct Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS)

Jessica and Chad Browning were ecstatic last fall when they learned they were expecting twins. They had two children already, but wanted a third to round out their family. Twins were a bonus. About 19 weeks into the pregnancy, however, they received a shattering diagnosis: their babies had Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS), a life-threatening condition in which the placenta is shared unequally by identical twins.

The condition, which occurs in about 15 percent of identical twins, can lead to a severe discrepancy in blood flow, amniotic fluid volume and fetal growth, and can result in up to a 90 percent mortality rate for one or both twins, said Dr. Michael Zaretsky, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at UT Southwestern Medical Center and the maternal-fetal medicine specialist to whom Mrs. Browning was referred.

"It's shattering for parents to get this diagnosis," Dr. Zaretsky said. "They'll do anything to make it a good outcome. Our goal is to do it right." Dr. Zaretsky is one of the only maternal-fetal medicine specialists in North Texas who had been trained in a procedure to correct the syndrome. In December 2010, he and Dr. Ashley Hickman, also an assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology and a maternal-fetal medicine specialist at UT Southwestern, along with nursing staff at Parkland Memorial Hospital, successfully performed for the first time in Dallas a fetoscopic laser procedure to correct TTTS.

The surgery improved the twins' chances of survival to between 60 percent to 70 percent and 90 percent for at least one survivor. On Feb. 25, 2011, the twins were delivered by Cesarean section at 32 weeks, and both were healthy. Alexis Nicole weighed 3 pounds, 9 ounces, and Amber Rose weighed 4 pounds, 6 ounces. They spent just two weeks in a Carrollton hospital before being released. Dr. Zaretsky, with colleagues from Parkland, UT Southwestern and Children's Medical Center Dallas, developed the fetal surgery over a four-year period in partnership with the Cincinnati, Ohio-based Fetal Care Center, one of only a dozen institutions in the U.S. that offers the procedure.



During the 60- to 90-minute surgery, a surgical telescope (fetoscope) was inserted into the amniotic sac of the recipient twin, allowing Drs. Zaretsky and Hickman to “map” the placenta and determine which blood vessels crossed the vascular equator, or the point at which blood flows to one twin or the other. Dr. Zaretsky, who is also director of maternal-fetal medicine at Children’s Medical Center at Legacy in Plano, then used laser fiber technology to seal off several vessels and reroute blood flow to both twins. The team of specialists also drained two liters of amniotic fluid from the larger fetal sac and created small openings in the fetal membrane to equalize fluid faster.

Mrs. Brown spent the remainder of her pregnancy on bed rest. When her girls were delivered, the larger twin needed some help with continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), which blows air through an infant’s nostrils to gently inflate the lungs. CPAP machines are routinely used by adults with sleep apnea to aid breathing.

“I thought, ‘If I could just hear them cry, then I’d know they were all right,’” mom said. “Alexis just wailed, and I started crying. Amber needed some help; she would forget to breathe at times. But after 12 hours on a CPAP, she picked it up on her own. It was just wonderful.”

Dr. Zaretsky said the most common complication of the procedure is the initiation of preterm labor, caused by breaking

the amniotic sac; this occurs about 8 percent of the time. Other medical concerns are possible rapid fluctuation of blood flow for the fetuses during the procedure, or placenta blood vessels that begin bleeding. Looking back, Mrs. Browning said she was willing to take those risks. “It is very scary, but honestly and truly, if we hadn’t had this procedure, we know we would not have both girls here. This surgery really does save lives.”

New Book Chronicling the Life of Famous Atlanta Twin Sisters is Now Available



A new book about twins called *Running on Full... The Story of Ruth and Ruby Crawford* features the fascinating lives of the famous Atlanta twins, Ruth and Ruby Crawford.

Their amazing lives are told through many interviews between the twins and the book’s author, from their early years growing up in small-town Temple, Georgia, to their influential, exciting times in big-city

Atlanta from the 1940s, through their passing at ages 86 and 90 in 2005 and 2009, respectively. Ruth and Ruby were famous nationwide, appearing on such hit TV shows as “What’s My Line” (stumping the panel) and, in recent years, “The Oprah Winfrey Show”. They were also well known supporters of former President Jimmy Carter’s two presidential bids. Always dressed identically, the pioneering sisters became an icon for the city of Atlanta, which they proudly called home for more than 60 years. Included in the 153-page book are more than 70 photos of the Ruth and Ruby along with their friends and family. The book shares the love between these sisters and the history of these twin pioneers in real estate, law (they were both attorneys), banking (both banking executives), and politics. Dunwoody, Ga., resident Neil Wilkinson’s entertaining biography portrays two remarkable Georgia twin sisters who were instrumental in breaking through many of the glass ceilings encountered by women in mid-twentieth-century America, in such diverse fields as law, accounting, politics, and real estate. For ordering information, please go to <http://www.kennesaw.edu/ksupress/TybeeDays.shtml>

Hit YouTube Show Features Twin Sisters Sneezing in Sync!

What is more adorable than one cute baby? Two cute babies! And the hit YouTube show *CuteWinFail* shows two identical sisters so in sync that they are caught on camera sneezing at the exact same time. *CuteWinFail* is a comedy series hosted by YouTube sensation Toby Turner. Weekly episodes put three user-generated videos to the test to determine which one is cute, which one wins—and which one is just a big, old, giant fail!



WATCH THE VIDEO HERE
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3wPepC_XRw

AN IMPORTANT UPDATE FROM THE NEW PUBLISHERS OF TWINS MAGAZINE...

Dear TWINS Magazine readers:

Thank you all for your patience and understanding through this very difficult time for our family. Dealing with an 84-year-old ailing father who has just been checked into hospice care coupled with the stress and energy fighting a breast cancer diagnosis for Gina, we have been doing our best to keep up with all online orders in our Shoppe and any TWINS Magazine subscription data we receive through this difficult time. We have felt your love and support while we fight the good fight and believe that with all of your positive thoughts and prayers from the wonderful parents of multiples community, we will get through this difficult and challenging time.

Sincerely,
 William and Gina Cody

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Monthly-

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1

MONTH 1

Head flops back if unsupported • Strong reflex jerkiness • Roots to breast • Grasps rattle or finger briefly • Startles unexpectedly (Moro reflex) • “Molds” to person holding baby • Focuses on face within 6 inches • Makes eye contact • Sees large black & white patterns • Prefers human face to other patterns • Cries for assistance • Turns head toward familiar sounds, voices



2

MONTH 2

Lifts head at 45 degrees • Holds object for few seconds • Focuses on objects several feet away • Bats hands at objects • Smiles at familiar sounds, voices, faces • Soothes self with sucking • Shows anticipation, excitement • Coos and gurgles when happy • Begins to recognize voices, faces, objects



3

MONTH 3

Raises head, chest when lying on tummy • Tracks moving objects side-to side • Puts both hands together • Laughs, squeals at play; cries when play stops • Distinguishes parents and familiar faces • Follows moving objects with eyes • Studies own hands, feet • Sees colors



4

MONTH 4

Lifts head to 90 degrees • Supports upper body with arms briefly when on tummy • Rolls over one way • Grasps rattle or slim objects • Smiles at reflection in mirror • More able to self-soothe • Smiles and gurgles to gain attention • Makes consonant sounds • Reaches for objects • Responds to music • Begins to display memory



5

MONTH 5

Holds head steady when sitting or held • Guides dangling toys to mouth • Sucks toes • Holds bottle w/one or both hands • Vocalizes more to gain attention • Responds to others' emotions • Imitates sounds: vowels and consonants • Seeks fallen objects, reaches for objects • Curious about new environments • Protests if toy is taken away



6

MONTH 6

Bears some weight on legs when held • Turns head in both directions • “Swims” & pushes when on tummy • Wants to feed self, play with food • Expresses pleasure and displeasure • Shows anxiety at separating from mom • Reacts negatively to strangers • Recognizes own name • Combines sounds • Studies, compares objects • Twists & turns in all directions



Milestones

4-Multiples in the 1st Year



MONTH 7

Sits without support • Rolls over in both directions • Rocks on hands and knees • May crawl, forward or backward • Balances head well • Eats a cracker without being fed • Shows sense of humor • Demonstrates social orientation Says "Mama" and "Dada" • Waves bye-bye



MONTH 8

Sits alone and plays by self • Pursues & picks up objects • Crawls forward or backward • Pulls self up on tables, chairs • Stands while holding onto something Demands attention • Pushes away unwanted objects such as toys and food • Smiles at own image in mirror • Claps hands, plays patty-cake • Recalls events, out-of-sight people, objects



MONTH 9

Pulls to sitting position from stomach • Pulls to standing from sitting • Begins to climb • Cries simply because twin is crying • Passes toy from one hand to the other • Eats finger foods • Likes to perform for an audience • Wants to play near mother/father • Uses objects (telephone, hairbrush, spoon) appropriately • Locates lost or hidden objects easily • Gets bored with repetition of same game or activity • Begins to evaluate people's moods • Performs for an audience and will repeat the act if applauded



MONTH 10

Walks around furniture • Sits in upright position • Carries objects in one hand • Dances to music • Plays peek-a-boo • Enjoys social interaction, attention • Becomes very self-aware • Displays moods • Babbles & chatters • Points to nose, mouth, ears on request • Likes to roll ball back to you, toss objects • Imitates gestures, face expressions, sounds • Understands meaning of "no" • Follows simple instructions, commands • Curious, wants to discover contents of drawers, cabinets, purses, boxes



MONTH 11

Becomes well-balanced • Squats and stoops • Stands on tiptoes • Sits intentionally without falling • Tastes, chews everything • Fits small objects inside larger ones • Expresses wants w/ gestures & sounds • Pulls off socks, unties shoes • Seeks approval, shows stubbornness • Helps dress self • Describes objects, people, places • Drinks from a cup w/o assistance • Links words with objects, places • Recognizes & learns sexual identity



MONTH 12

Crawls up & down stairs • Stands alone • May try to walk • May climb out of crib, highchair • Shows affection to favorite people, toys • Demonstrates needs w/o crying • Resists napping • Throws temper tantrums • May become picky eater • Imitates words • Identifies animals, objects, colors in picture books • Turns pages of books (sometimes in clumps) • Recalls objects, people for longer times





PREGNANCY

By Françoise von Trapp Gibson

Easing High-Risk

Fears

Not every twin pregnancy is complicated

Françoise von Trapp Gibson of Boston, Massachusetts, is freelance sales and marketing consultant and the mother of twin girls.

When our infertility specialist discovered twins during an ultrasound six weeks into my pregnancy, she advised us to seek the care of a high-risk specialist. Dismay overshadowed the joy of our good fortune. After two tearful years of infertility treatments, I couldn't believe there was something else to worry about. Finally, I was pregnant! I just wanted to relax and enjoy it.

I refused to believe that simply because I was carrying twins, I was destined to experience complications. We decided to do some research before panicking. My first phone call was to Dr. Fred Rossman, a general OB/GYN practicing where we lived in Morrisville, Vermont.

Fortunately, Dr. Rossman had experience with twin pregnancies and immediately put me at ease by defining "high risk." While twin pregnancies do increase the risk of certain complications for both the mother and the babies, those risks are still only possibilities, not an eventuality. In fact, with the increasing number of multiple births, some physicians no longer automatically classify twin pregnancies as high-risk.

Kathy Ellison of Bedford, Massachusetts, mother of 2-year-old fraternal twins Matthew and Emily, says hers wasn't considered a high-risk pregnancy by her physicians at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts. She was referred to Dr. Betty Ng, of About Women by Women, a general OB/

GYN practice affiliated with Newton-Wellesley Hospital in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

What is important to remember, says Dr. Ng, is that the majority of twin pregnancies work out fine. "You do have to watch the patient carefully," she says, "but there is the potential that she will have a 'normal' full-term pregnancy."

The key to treating a twin pregnancy is vigilance and awareness on the part of the attending physician, notes Dr. Thomas Johnson, retired director of medical education for the department of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in Worcester, Massachusetts. Dr. Johnson stressed the importance of defining potentially hazardous conditions early on. The attending physician must have the ability to obtain the knowledge necessary to monitor a twin pregnancy. More ultrasounds, more frequent office visits and close observation for the possibility of pre-term labor define the general protocol of most obstetricians when twins are involved.

The ultrasounds are an important tool for estimating fetal growth, weight and position. Discordant growth—when one baby is growing faster than the other—points to mal-distribution of nutrients and can lead to pre-term labor. Monitoring fetal position is crucial because if one or both of the babies are breech, a cesarean may be required. Whereas it is possible to tell a singleton's position by feel, it is next to impossible with twins.

UNDERSTANDING RISK FACTORS

Mary Hostetter of Morrisville, Vermont, mother of four, including 4-year-old fraternal twins Joseph and Natalie, recalls the difference between her singleton and twin pregnancies. "Dr. Rossman educated me. He talked about what could happen, from the worst case scenario to the best. He prepared me for what might go wrong." She looked forward to her ultrasounds because they assured her that everything was okay. Because 50% of all twin pregnancies deliver before 37 weeks gestation, delivering early was her greatest concern. She need not have worried. She delivered her babies two days before her due date.

The issue of pre-term labor is a controversial one among physicians. "We don't know much about pre-term labor," Dr. Johnson says. "We've been looking for decades to indentify the risk factors."

Philosophies differ among doctors regarding the use of routine cervical exams and bed rest as methods of prediction and prevention for pre-term labor. "When it comes to labor, pre-term or full-term, dilation is not an indicator, contractions are," Dr. Rossman explains. "It has not been proven that cervical dilation predicts the date of delivery."

A woman can be dilated for several months and never go into labor. It's not uncommon for a woman who has already been through a pregnancy to be dilated a few centimeters her entire pregnancy. Only dilation accompanied by contractions indicates labor. For these reasons, Rossman doesn't perform routine internal exams. He feels that internal exams are done only because they've been a standard procedure for so long.

Dr. Johnson agrees and only performs internal exams when there are specific indications of complications, such as a history of pre-term labor or an incompetent cervix.

On the flip side, Dr. Ng feels internal exams can be useful in predicting possible pre-term labor. "Generally, the patient has to be experiencing some cramping before I check," she notes, adding that for almost every twin pregnancy she has performed an internal before the last month.

Dr. John Coates, an OB/GYN in Montpelier, Vermont, begins routine cervical checks in twin pregnancies at 28 weeks gestation. He believes that the condition of the patient's cervix may reveal undetected contractions, putting her at risk for per-term labor. "If you can prevent pre-term labor, you've done a great job in giving the babies a good start." Dr. Coates explains. He also generally recommends bed rest from 28 to 36 weeks gestation; though there is no documented proof that it prevents pre-term labor.

Dr. Ng also encourages her patients to restrict activity from 24 to 30 weeks, when the danger of pre-term labor is at its peak. "Prevention is better than treatment," she says. "Decreasing activity decreases contractions. Whether that prevents pre-term labor, we don't know. That's where the controversy is."

EVERY PREGNANCY IS DIFFERENT

Nancy Haab of Stowe, Vermont, mother of 5-year-old Charlotte, and 4-year-old identical twins Kimberly and Samantha, was put on bed rest almost immediately after it was discovered she was carrying twins six months into her pregnancy. However, a busy schedule prevented her from following instructions.

Continued on page 17



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INFANT

Taking it One Pump at a Time

by Abby Mitchell



So I thought I would start writing down all the crazy things I did while pumping and the reasons why I made it last 14 LONG months!

Let's start in the beginning. My girls were 8.5 weeks early. Not ever was it my plan to leave my babies behind when I left the hospital. However, I don't think the NICU is in any mother's head as an option, but it was, so there you have it!

The day after the girls were born, I started pumping with the Medela Classic...AKA Big Blue...it was a beast! I was scared I would fall asleep and wake up with my poor sore boobs sucked all the way down to the bottom of the bottle! But that is what got me started.

My lactation consultant came up with a pump schedule that allowed me to sleep four to five hours straight at night—that was, until the girls came home! Anyway, I would pump eight times a day, getting up in the middle of the night once to pump. I started taking supplements early on so that I could build a stock up. My goal was 12 weeks of 100 percent breast milk. I am not sure why the number was in my head, but that was my goal. I set goals all along the way, small ones, and then when they were reached, I set another small one. My girls would never latch and take their feed from me—go

figure when you have a little bottle that drips it right into your mouth! I had a lactation lady come to my house to work with us, but by the time they were strong enough to pull what they were eating, they were 15 weeks old and they were not going to try!

So back to my goals, 12 weeks 100 percent breast milk—check! That was made so then it was let's make it to six months with them getting 50 percent breast and 50 percent formula. Well, after two months of going 50/50 and freezing any extra, I had more than 500oz in my freezer. So I went back to 100 percent until they were 9 months old. At that point, I had dropped down from 8 pumps a day to 6, and my new goal was to make it to their one-year birthday. About a month before then, I called my lactation consultant for a pep talk...lets face it, pumping SUCKS!

She told me (not the news I wanted to hear) I could not quit at their one year birthday because it was during RSV season. They had been so healthy that they did not qualify for the synagis shots this year. So... the pumping continued. When I got to a year, I dropped down to three to four pumps a day and they were still getting 50 percent, or more. I was no longer freezing, and the doctor said I had to keep them on formula



until their adjusted 1 year. At 14 months, their adjusted birthday, I was pumping twice a day, still getting 10-12 oz a day.

I was done! My girls are on whole milk, RSV season is behind us, and now, if I could just dry up!

HERE IS A LIST OF PEOPLE THAT WALKED IN ON ME:

Mother in-law, Father In-law, my husband's grandmother, many co-workers, my construction installers, my nephew, friends, and the list goes on and on!

CRAZY PLACES I PUMPED:

In my car daily (great way to multitask...working full time and a four-year old at home, you have to!); I took my pump with me while the twins were getting their newborn pictures taken; the drive-thru at McDonalds (I keep telling myself they never knew); back of my parents car with my dad driving; on calls with customers (I am in construction...it could be a piece of machinery, right?); cemetery (yes, the place is a ghost town until you pull out the girls, then people flock to you); back yard (no one lives behind us); I have hooked up going 70 mph down the road (driving with my knee); I got pulled over while pumping (surprised cop!); and I pumped in a parking lot at a golf course during a tournament I was playing in! (I won an award and was walking up with my milk in hand as they called my name—you should've seen the look on my boss' face... he knew what was in the bag).

So I guess with all of this said, you can do it, you can make it work, just make small goals. I NEVER thought I would make it just pumping to 14 months. I was not sure I would make it 12 weeks. But by setting small goals you can take it one pump at a time! ♥

Abby Mitchell is a mom of a 4 year old and twins that are almost 15 months and she also works full time.

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TODDLERS

Are Your Toddlers Picky Eaters?

Tips on getting your toddler twins to eat!

Compiled by the editors at TWINS Magazine

We receive lots of letters and emails from readers who can't seem to get their toddler twins to eat and the issues that go along with this ongoing struggle. We thought it would be very helpful to include some of the emails and advice we have received from other mothers of multiples and advice from an expert that can help get your picky eaters back on track...

Advice from other MOMs

I'm a mother of 3-year-old twin boys and I'm experiencing the same problems. I have found that they eat much better if they eat as soon as we are home in the afternoon. If the picky eater is having problems eating, I just make sure he gets something such as milk, pudding or grilled cheese that I know he will eat. Usually, if we eat dinner right away he will eat. Just remember when they get hungry they will eat. I don't like forcing them to eat; it makes dinner time unpleasant.

—Patsi Johnson, Centralia, ILL

I have 18-month-old twin girls, one of whom eats great. I give them what I know they will eat and sometimes feed them baby food. I don't let the other one down from the table until both have eaten. You have to train them that when it's meal time, it's time to eat and not time to play games. I am a single mother and it's hard, but in the long run it turns out to be easy.

—Michelle Eshelman, Scio, OR

Amy of Lansdale Pennsylvania writes: "I am a mother of 2-year-old twin girls and am having a hard time getting them to eat dinner. Kelsey is a big eater; Kira sometimes picks at one or two pieces of food, but usually does not eat anything at all. She cries to get down from the table. Letting her down makes Kelsey, who would eat, want to get down, too! The last time I took them to the doctor, Kira had lost some weight. After that, I gave her whatever she wanted—cereal, baby food, etc. Some people say I should give them anything they want so that Kira will not continue to lose weight; others tell me that by doing this my twins will never learn "this is what is for dinner." With the two instigating each other, I do not know what to do. Please help!"

I have 27-month old boy/girl twins. Sometimes they don't eat as well as I would like. Snacking before meal time and drinking a lot of juice will fill them up, causing them to be less likely to be hungry enough to eat. I came up with some ideas to get them to eat that might work:

- Never let the other one down until both are finished eating.
- Give the first one finished a toy or read a book to both while they are eating.
- Play games with them. One of these is I shut my eyes and tell them I'm waiting for the bunny to eat the food off my spoon. Then I act surprised when the food is gone.

- Let them prepare their food. They can help pour drinks, crack eggs or mix items together in a bowl.
- If they don't eat at dinner, save their plates and give it to them as bedtime snacks. But, you must decide if a food you serve is something they just don't like.

—Edie Shultz, Denver, CO



I have 2 1/2-year-old fraternal twin boys. The picky eater, who weighs 10 pounds less than his brother who is a big eater, frequently says "don't like it" and throws the food on the wall, floor or at me. It sounds as if your twins are sitting in a chair at a table for meals. I tried this, and it was a major free-for-all. High chairs are the best way to get them to settle down and eat. I always have something he likes already on the tray (when I put him in it). I have the food already prepared and serve small amounts at a time. I let him have crayons and paper or small toys to extend the "sitting" time.

I am a Registered Dietitian, so getting my picky eater to eat is very important to me. I received some valuable advice from the feeding clinic at Children's Hospital in Buffalo, where I take my son because his height and weight skirts the bottom of the growth chart. They gave me "The Food Rules" that includes, among other rules, regular meal and snack times, seated in the high chair or table, and only water between meals. This has helped relieve my anxiety, because if he doesn't eat a meal or snack well, another scheduled time is soon coming to make it up. I also try and make every bite count by making it nutritionally and calorically dense; I add milk powder to the milk for extra protein, grind up nuts and seeds and add them along with wheat germ to his peanut butter, make high calorie milkshakes, etc.

Although you don't want to feel like a short-order cook in an all night diner, I think you have to respect each individual's food preferences. Always have an alternate on hand that you know they will like if they don't like what's being served. To my dismay, he loves "junk food," which I let him have in small amounts. What your child eats over the course of a week or so matters, not that one meal or that one day. Following these tips, my son has shown a gradual, steady weight gain. My good eater has learned to sit in his high chair and continue eating leisurely while his brother, always on the go, may need to get up before the rest of us and go play.

—Susan Natali, Buffalo, NY

I have 2-year-old twin boys and one also refuses meals while his brother eats enough to get by. We try feeding them later in the evening, around 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. I have found that they ask for more and play with the food less if we give them small portions, one at a time. First, we give them a small portion of vegetables, then take it away and give them a small portion of our main dish. If you give them drinks all day, it suppresses their appetites. Our doctor also put my boys on Pediasure, a nutritional formula for toddlers, and it has helped. Check with your doctor about their weight gain, too!

—Sara Ferry, Tampa Bay, FL

What do the Experts Say?

Patricia Malmstrom, M.A., director of Twin Services Consulting and co-author of *The Art of Parenting Twins* gives parents some good advice. ... Of course any parent is worried when one child doesn't seem to be eating properly. You want your toddlers to eat and to eat well. To achieve both goals provide them with a comfortable atmosphere in which to have meals and nutritious food which appeals to their individual tastes and appetites.

Keep in mind that toddlers have immature digestive systems. Not all are ready or able to adapt to three meals a day. In fact, some adults feel much better on several small meals a day, rather than three large ones. How do you meet their needs and maintain a semblance of household order? I remember a family much like yours that eliminated dinner time struggles by letting the children eat meals earlier and at their own low table in the kitchen. Afterwards, the girls were welcome to join the rest of the family at the dinner table or to play nearby. Seated at their own table, unworried about keeping up with their grown-ups, they relaxed. Their parents kept a variety of healthy foods available on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so that they could eat whenever hunger struck. At meal times the girls served themselves foods which they helped to set out on their table. Research tells us that when they are allowed to choose, children will eat what they

Continued on page 25



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Getting ready for “real school”

by J. Cameron Tew



Every Monday and Wednesday morning, I wake my sons, Brandon, Nathan and Jason, from their slumber. As they rub the sleep from their eyes, I help them pull on shirts and pants and get ready for a big day. We grab a quick breakfast, pick up their book bags and head out to “school”. For them, school consists of three hours at the local church pre-school. And from what I’ve seen, the social and developmental experience has been very valuable. Our three little boys who frequently refused to speak and only played with each other because they had few other friends, now talk up a storm. They have six other playmates with whom they finger-paint, shoot baskets and listen to stories during reading time. Sure, they still like to spend

a lot of time together and share blocks and train sets, but at preschool they branch out. Jason can often be found reading books with Will. Nathan might be playing cars with Patrick. Brandon could be helping Allison pretend to iron clothes in the family-life play center. Being part of a classroom has given the boys a chance to develop individual identities with friends who don’t lump them together or refer to them as “the triplets.” To their buddies, they are different people who have different likes, dislikes and their own distinct personalities.

EXPLORING ON THEIR OWN

At preschool, they can explore all sorts of activities without their two brothers hanging around wanting to do the same

J. Cameron Tew of *Wendell, North Carolina* is a newspaper editor and the father of triplet boys.

thing to impress Mommy and Daddy. It has allowed them to blossom into confident and exciting little guys. Now, when I pick them up from school, each takes a turn telling me what he did that day at school.

"I played with Play-Doh," Brandon might say, "And Jason colored." "No, I not," Jason says. "I draw a sharp tooth." He opens his book bag and pulls out a piece of white paper with crayon marks all over it and proceeds to tell me how it is a dinosaur. Not to be outdone, Nathan pipes in, "Look Daddy," he says. "I drew, too." He holds up his piece of paper and describes the wonderful world he imagined where he and his brothers played baseball with their friends at school.

INDIVIDUAL TIME

Preschool is a place where structure takes over from the chaos of home. Sure, we try to set aside time at home to read books and work puzzles, but often we get sidetracked when someone wants juice or if the phone rings and we have to leave them to their own devices. At preschool, the day is their day. It's their time to listen to other adults and try to please them. It's their time to try new thing, cutting out paper hearts or using glue to make cards for Mommy and Daddy. They have the structure of a teacher offering them a variety of ideas and projects to try and the freedom to choose which projects fit their fancy for the day. While we choose not to have our boys in a full-time day-care center, my wife and I believe that time spent away from us in another caring environment has helped Brandon's, Nathan's and Jason's development.

LEARNING TO SHARE

The boys have always shared toys and understood that hoarding the coveted Woody's and Buzzes is not allowed. But, at preschool they have come to understand that sometimes they might have to choose a secondary toy to play with if some of their friends already have the prized toys. Trips to the playground mean that Brandon might have to head over to the slide because the three swings are already full. Patience with brothers and friends is tested, but the time spent working out their problems under the watchful eye of adults has given them more cognitive thinking abilities.

They understand that the consequence of cutting in line is sitting down for a few minutes. Brandon, Nathan and Jason always try to be aware that every playmate needs to get a turn at participating in special games or playing with the new toys.

My wife and I sometimes dread the thought of the boys moving on to Kindergarten in the near future. However, we are sure that attending preschool will have played a positive role in their development. Because of this valuable experience, we are confident that the boys will be ready for "real school." ♥



Continued from page 11

PREGNANCY

She went into pre-term labor at 26 weeks gestation, but it was successfully halted with bed rest and with the drug, Terbutaline. She remained hospitalized on complete bed rest for five weeks, went into labor again at 31 weeks gestation and this time delivered by cesarean.

Because the contractions stopped once she was in bed and on medication, Nancy thinks she would not have experienced per-term labor had she followed her doctor's instructions. But Dr. Johnson says that is unlikely. Once labor is in progress, treatments of magnesium sulfate and other drugs combined with short-term bed rest will often stop labor. This doesn't mean the same treatment can be applied to prevent pre-term labor from starting.

Dr. Rossman agrees and notes that there is little to be done to actually prevent or predict pre-term labor. What is really important is to detect it in its early stages so it can be stopped. For these reasons, he doesn't believe in bed rest as a preventative measure. "If someone is active, busy and doing well, I'm not going to disrupt that activity," he says. To the contrary, he thinks the disruption of normal activity can be just as detrimental.

"I think the doctor-patient relationship is key," says Dr. Ng of a successful twin pregnancy. "I treat each patient differently from the next, there's no magic formula I follow." Dr. Rossman says: "Women who are told they are high-risk will make their own decisions about the kind of care they want." Some will feel more comfortable with more intervention or want to deliver in a hospital with a neonatal intensive care unit, for example.

HANDLE WITH CARE

Whether they bear the high-risk label or not, all twin pregnancies are handled with special care. What is most important is to find a physician you trust and with whom you feel comfortable. More than anything, I believe my pregnancy was so relaxed and free of complications because I found a physician whose approach to "high-risk" matched my needs and expectations. ♥

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browse the entire collection at: www.JanelRussell.com

Summer Vacation Fun

by Christa D. Reed

for Families with Multiples

There are thousands of great vacation spots around the United States and worldwide that offer a variety of activities and amenities, but are these amazing 'hot spots' a good fit for a family that is traveling with young twins and maybe more? What might be the perfect romantic vacation get-a-way more than likely won't be the best choice when traveling with children. So, what is a family with multiples (& more) to do? We have some suggestions on fun family get-a-ways and vacation hot spots that we recommend because they are not only family-friendly but also offer activities and fun for kids. These are the 'hot spots' WE love and a few places you may want to check out when planning your summer vacation.




Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe Resort, Spa and Casino, Incline Village, Nevada

If you can't decide on a beach or mountain vacation then explore all the wonders of Lake Tahoe and experience the best of both worlds! The Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe is a hotel resort, spa and casino and offers amazing views, beautiful and comfortable full-size rooms and suites as well as 24 lakeside cottages. The property is located on 500 feet of private beach, boasts a full service gym, a spa, casino and be sure to check out Camp Hyatt® for supervised day care and sessions for ages 5 to 12, video arcade and just-for-kids wading pool and playground. Visit their website at: <http://laketahoe.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/index.jsp> for more information.

 Grand Mound, WA



The Vee Bar Guest and Dude ranch located near Laramie Wyoming


 This family-friendly ranch experience includes hiking, fishing, river tubing, trap shooting, camping, herding cattle, hayrides and more! This historical place is located at the base of the Snowy Range Mountains and is a great vacation place for kids. The terrain is gentle and safe with plenty of room to run and play. Children six and older are eligible for horseback riding activities with parents or other children. All children can work on their horsemanship skills by competing in the gymkhana or moving cattle while receiving pointers and coaching from our family-friendly wranglers. www.veebar.com



Kansas City



YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park and Snow Mountain Ranch, Colorado

 Looking for a great mountain vacation? Head to colorful Colorado and book your stay at one of two wonderful family vacation spots: YMCA of the Rockies at the Estes Park Center or in Snow Mountain Ranch. Each location offers one, two and three bedroom cabins or you can enjoy a relaxing stay in their comfortable lodge. There are so many activities for kids and families you will have a hard time deciding which ones to do. Whether it is rushing down between the mountain pines on the zip line, making crafts, horseback riding or taking an evening family hayride and then wrapping up your evening singing songs around the campfire, this place has it all. <http://www.ymcarockies.org/>





The Great Wolf Lodge & Resorts

If you are looking for a resort that has it all under one roof, then head to one of the numerous Great Wolf Lodge & Resorts with locations throughout the U.S. for ultimate family-fun! With their indoor/outdoor water park resorts and hotel properties your family is sure to have an amazing experience in a clean, safe and family-friendly environment. Every aspect of Great Wolf Lodge is designed for family fun from their 84-degree indoor water parks filled with slides and pools, to their MagiQuest adventure game, to nightly fireside Story Time. Great Wolf Lodge Resorts are located all over the U.S. www.greatwolf.com



Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa

If you are looking for a fantastic beach vacation get-a-way then head down to Florida's Emerald Gulf Coast and stay at the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa. Located directly on the white sandy beaches of Destin, Florida this amazing property offers everything you need for a relaxing and fun family vacation that you will always remember. They have numerous organized kids' activities that keep them busy and having fun while mom & dad can have some free time, too! Their junior suites cater to kids with bunk beds and video game consoles and can accommodate larger families and the property has numerous restaurants, bars and has two large outdoor swimming pools and one indoor pool. Visit their website to learn more http://www1.hilton.com/en_US/hi/hotel/DESHIHF-Hilton-Sandestin-Beach-Golf-Resort-Spa-Florida/index.do



Grapevine, TX

KS

Wisconsin Dells, WI

Traverse City, MI

Niagara Falls, Canada

Pocono Mountains, PA

Sandusky, OH

Cincinnati-Mason, OH

Williamsburg, VA

Charlotte-Concord, NC



Plan to Be Spontaneous This Summer

TIPS FOR A GREAT FAMILY TRIP

(Family Features) For many families, summer is the time to hit the open road and see the country. However, there is a lot of pressure for parents to take their children everywhere, see everything and keep a tight schedule, according to “Family Adventure Mom,” Deborah Geigis Berry.

“The one thing many of us do wrong is over plan — I used to be guilty of that as well,” Berry says. “I remember once I tried to take my family hiking, out to eat and whale watching in just four hours. It was crazy.”

Since great summer memories can be among the most important moments for your family, it is crucial to make sure you are ready to enjoy them when they happen.

“When traveling with kids, spontaneous moments will lead to the best summer memories,” Berry says. “But believe it or not, you have to prepare to be spontaneous.”

Berry shares travel tips that can help make great summer memories on your next family vacation:

BRING A VIP

Be prepared to enjoy any type of adventure with a VIP, or “Very Important Pack.” Berry’s VIP includes a wide-brimmed waterproof hat, beach ball, card games, map, photo album of family members if headed to a family reunion, and some pre-addressed labels and stamps.

BAN BUGS

Ensure your family and your precious summer moments are protected from mosquitoes and other biting insects. Whether you’re headed out for a weekend camping trip or taking the kids hiking, there’s an OFF! insect repellent available to make sure you can enjoy your outdoor moments. “When we head to the beach I make sure to pack OFF! Clip-On Mosquito Repellent because it can be placed on my beach bag or lounge chair and within minutes creates head to toe protection,” says Berry.

PLAN FOR CHANGE

It’s important to remember that an itinerary should be used as a guide, not a directive. Know going into the trip you likely won’t be able to do everything. Focus on one highlight per family member to guarantee there’s something for everyone. Consider Missing the “Must-See”

Costly adventures don’t necessarily equal happiness. Children often enjoy a day at a little known bike path as much as a crowded, overpriced “must-see” attraction.

LIMIT “PLUG-IN” TIME

Limit the “plug-in” time for the children when watching movies and playing electronic games in the car. When time is up, engage them in family conversations, and have them write a letter to a grandparent or keep a journal of the trip.

Though it takes a bit of organizing to pull together these items, it’s certainly time well spent. A little planning upfront ensures that your family will be prepared to make unseen bumps or detours just another part of the fun.

Berry has one last bit of advice for travelers as they hit the road: “If you set your family trip up for spontaneity by bringing the right items along, even a simple road trip will be a blast,” she says. “And remember, skip the schedule — get on the open road and enjoy yourself!”

Get more travel tips, secrets and fun road ideas at www.familyadventuremom.com

As a mom who has taken her children on more than 30 adventure trips, Deb Geigis Berry is always on the lookout for summer fun. Berry is known for her travel expertise, and has covered family life as a writer and editor at national magazines like Parenting, Outside, and Scouting. Her travels have taken her everywhere from crossing the Kansas prairie in a covered wagon to feeding sharks in the Dutch Caribbean.

MORE TRAVEL TIPS

Here are more tips from the “Family Adventure Mom” Deb Geigis Berry:

Break in New Gear — Before you hit the road, make sure that you’ve sufficiently broken in or tested any new gear and equipment. This is especially important for new shoes or hiking boots. Test new tents, two-way radios and portable grills before you go, and remember to re-stock your first aid kit.

Establish a Family Collection — Select an item that you and your family can collect together. Rocks, local recipes and instruments are just a few fun ideas. “My family likes to collect candy bars from around the world and then we taste-test them all at family events,” Berry says.

Shop Local — Keep pit stops fresh by shopping for food at farmers markets. Stash a picnic basket with plates, utensils, napkins, cups and a ground cloth in the trunk for spontaneous outings.

Vacation Integration Night — The end of a vacation can be a letdown. The evening you return, have a Vacation Integration Night, where you and your family hold off answering mail and messages. Instead, use the time to share favorite memories and view photos from your trip.



Summer Fun with the Little Ones...



(Family Features)

The warm weather has finally arrived and parents everywhere are looking to make this summer one for the memory books. Summer always seems to fly by, with work, chores and family vacations taking priority

throughout the warm months. In order to take full advantage of everything the season has to offer, Huggies is helping Moms and Dads beat the heat with a variety of fun and easy summertime activities. From taking indoor activities outside to summer style and starting a garden, the options are endless. Whether it's your babies first summer or they're seasoned warm-weather experts, make it the best summer yet.

1. Take family activities outdoors

Whether its family dinners on the patio, reading the twins' favorite story under a shady tree, or stargazing at night, remember to get outside and enjoy the beautiful summer weather with the family.

2. Incorporate summer styles

From play dates to strolls around the neighborhood, Huggies is bringing back their popular jeans diaper. This denim accessory is perfect for any summer look. Not only will babies be rocking the hottest summer fashion, but they will also be helping diaper a baby in need. Moms can share their support by uploading a photo of their little one sporting the fashionable denim diaper at www.Huggies.com. For each photo uploaded or photo "liked" Huggies will help a baby in need by donating to Every Little Bottom.

3. Just add water

It's important to keep cool while enjoying a day outdoors in the hot summer sun. Think about breaking out the baby pool, sprinkler or hose, and incorporate bubbles or buckets for extra fun.

4. Keep it simple

As little ones become more active, summertime is the perfect opportunity to break out the blanket and head to a favorite outdoor spot. Even simple games like "Peek-a-Boo" are more exciting in the summer breeze.

5. Enjoy fresh air

Embrace the outdoors and enjoy fresh air with nightly walks around the neighborhood. The temperature will have cooled down, and babies often fall asleep to motion.

6. Introduce texture

Introducing your babies to the many fun textures of summer is important to their growing senses. Whether it's sand, grass or finger paint, the opportunities to expand their experiences grow greatly in the summer months. Try walking in a park, playing in the sandbox or touching garden flowers.

7. Summer outings

Packing a diaper bag and getting outside helps to make the most of summertime. Whether it's a stroll around the park or a visit to the

local zoo, a day out of the house can be fun for the whole family. If these places are within walking distance, try to resist the urge to drive and break out the stroller for a refreshing walk.

8. Take full advantage of holidays

There are plenty of great summer occasions to bring the family together and celebrate. Take advantage of the warm weather and take the party outside. From neighborhood cookouts to family parties at the park, outdoor holidays can create fond summer memories.

9. Start a garden

Find a small part of the yard and buy seeds for easy-to-grow vegetables, herbs and fruit. Little ones will enjoy the dirt's texture and they will absolutely love watching the garden grow right in front of their eyes.

10. Sing, dance and laugh

Break out the music and entertain little ones with singing and dancing in the yard. This is a great way to stimulate a baby's imagination while allowing them to do what they do best, wiggle and bounce to the beat. Laughing and giggling helps create an unbreakable bond between parent and child.

11. Hit the beach

Don't forget the sunscreen. The beach provides a unique sensory experience for all little ones. Everything from the birds chirping, to the waves, sand and shells will keep babies occupied for hours and guarantees a long afternoon nap for parents.

12. Enjoy a lazy day

Taking a break is underestimated in the summertime. Babies and parents deserve to lay back and relax after a busy summer day. Continue to take advantage of the warm summer weather while relaxing — take a snooze on the porch or rock on the hammock. These moments of rest will help you feel refreshed and ready to get back to all that fun in the sun.

13. Take a rainy day break

Not every summer day can be as sunny and beautiful as the next. But, there's always time for rainy day fun with the little one. Use everyday items around the house, such as boxes, pillows and blankets, and make a rainy day fort.

14. Have fun with frozen treats

Nothing says summer like frozen treats. Take a walk to the local ice cream shop or set up an ice cream sundae toppings station at home for a break during the hot summer months.

15. Start a summer scrapbook

Blue skies, sunny days and blooming flowers provide the perfect photo backdrop, so remember to capture each moment. Consider adding a photo of your little cutie in a denim diaper. Better yet, upload a photo of your little one on www.Huggies.com and share with family and friends, while helping to diaper a baby in need. From a baby's first picnic to their first glance of a firefly, these first smiles and flashes of curiosity are pictures that will be priceless for years to come.

To learn more about how you can give to babies in need visit www.EveryLittleBottom.com. ♥

WANT SOMETHING FUN TO DO WITH YOUR KIDDOS THIS SUMMER?

Plan a Sundae Fundae!

(Family Features) Every week needs more Sundaes. Celebrate a great meal, a special occasion, a terrific day or just up the "cool factor" of any gathering by scooping up one of America's favorite treats.

Makeover this all-American dessert with easy to create recipes that promise to add a "cherry on top" to the experience. Get inspired and dip into these creative combinations. For more summer sundae ideas, visit www.BlueBunny.com.



SAND BUCKET SUNDAES

Makes 8 servings

This make-ahead dessert is great fun for summer parties or family desserts.

- 4 cups Blue Bunny Caramel Praline Crunch Frozen Yogurt
- 1/2 cup butterscotch-caramel ice cream topping, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup cinnamon graham cracker crumbs
- Gummy sea-shaped candies, optional
- Sea shell-shaped chocolate candies
- 2 small pails or buckets (about 2 cups in size), washed

In each bucket, layer 1 cup frozen yogurt, 2 tablespoons butterscotch-caramel topping and 2 tablespoons cinnamon graham cracker crumbs. Repeat the layers ending with graham cracker crumbs.



S'MORES DIPPERS

Makes 4 servings

No campfire is needed for these s'mores.

- 1/2 cup marshmallow crème
- 1 teaspoon half-and-half or milk
- 2 tablespoons graham cracker crumbs
- 1 tablespoon red, white and blue cookie sprinkles

4 Blue Bunny Champ! Chocolate Swirl Mini Sundae Cones

In a small microwave-safe bowl, combine marshmallow crème and half-and-half. Microwave on High 20 seconds or until mixture just starts to puff; stir until blended. Cool for 3 minutes.

Meanwhile, in another small bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs and colored sprinkles; stir. Dip cones into marshmallow mixture then into graham cracker mixture. Serve immediately. Additional cones may be used to use the remaining graham cracker and marshmallow mixtures.

Recipe tested in a 1250-watt microwave. Adjust cooking times accordingly.



TRIPLE CHOCOLATE CAKE SUNDAE

Makes 4 servings

Chocolate lovers will adore this sundae topped with a white chocolate-raspberry sauce.

- 3 tablespoons half-and-half
- 1 3.5-ounce bar high-quality white chocolate, cut into small pieces
- 1 cup fresh raspberries, divided
- 4 1/2-cup scoops Blue Bunny Chef Duff's Premium Triple Chocolate Cake Ice Cream

In a small microwave-safe bowl, combine half-and-half and white chocolate. Microwave on High, 30 seconds; stir until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth. Heat an additional 10 seconds if not melted. Cover and refrigerate until thickened to a medium sauce, about 50 minutes.* (Recipe tested in a 1250-watt microwave. Adjust cooking times accordingly.) Gently fold in 1/4 cup raspberries. Place ice cream into 4 serving bowls. Top each with a scant 2 tablespoons white chocolate-raspberry sauce and about 4 fresh raspberries.

*If sauce thickens too much during refrigeration, re-warm slightly in microwave, about 10 seconds.

CAMPFIRE SUNDAES

Makes 4 servings

Your children will have fun making their own campfire desserts.

- 4 chewy chocolate chunk granola bars
- 4 1/2-cup scoops Blue Bunny Premium Peanut Butter Panic Ice Cream
- 4 tablespoons butterscotch-caramel ice cream topping
- 16 pieces candy corn

Cut granola bars in half lengthwise then in half widthwise, forming 4 pieces.

For each sundae, arrange 4 granola bar pieces on a small plate to form "wood logs." Top with 1 scoop ice cream, 1 tablespoon butterscotch-caramel topping and 4 candy corn "flames." Serve immediately.



Water Safety Times Two!

Swimming pools are the number one drowning risk for preschoolers. Your twins may love splashing in a play pool to cool off this summer, others may be wary. Don't force the issue. They are developing their attitudes toward water. Your main job is to keep them safe.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends waiting until age four (4) for swimming lessons. Before your jump into the deep water, determine if your twins are ready for swimming lessons.

Ask yourself:

- Do they love or fear the water?
- Are they developmentally mature?
- Are they able to follow instructions?

Many swim programs require mom to be in the pool with her child to help him or her learn to swim. With twins, this is not realistic or safe. If you decide to enroll them in swim lessons, consider private lessons, find a program that provides assistants or recruit a friend or dad to help.

Proponents of infant swim lessons claim that babies as young as 6-months of age can learn a back float and save themselves

from drowning if they fall into a swimming pool. Teaching children to never go near the water without an adult present is the most important part of any swim lessons.

Just because your twins learn to swim does not mean that they are safe in the water! In fact, many parents report that learning to swim gave their twins a false sense of security. Never turn your back on children in the water.

If you don't already know CPR, take a class. In a heartbeat—while you are helping one

twin—your other twin could land face down in the water. Always have a helper when you have twins in a wading pool, and keep a phone near you. Don't let an accident spoil more than their playtime. ♥



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Twins & Siblings without rivalry

by Nancy J. Sipes, Ph.D. and Janna S. Sipes, J.D.

Sibling rivalry is a hot topic in any family. But in a family with twins, this subject takes on a whole new light. We've said many times that having twins in the family changes everything to do with traditional family dynamics, and thus it is with twins and siblings.

To address this issue, we thought back on our own family. Keep in mind that we grew up in the late 1950s. No one talked about sibling rivalry back then. Families just did the best they could. Our parents didn't realize the impact that baby twins had on our two older sisters. They didn't see them disappear behind the cloud of attention that surrounded us as "the twins"—attention Mom had to give to us for our daily care, attention from other family members and attention from strangers each time we left the house. Inadvertently, a wall was erected between us and the closeness that we might otherwise have shared with our sisters was compromised.

A NEW APPROACH

Thankfully, times are different now. Today, parents of twins seem much more in tune with the challenges of integrating twins into the family dynamics. They frequently ask us how to add twins and siblings together to equal family harmony.

As we researched the "other-sibling" syndrome, we discovered an older sister of twins who is extremely well adjusted to her situation. Taryn Hames, age 15, was two years old when her fraternal

Nancy J. Sipes, Ph.D.,
and **Janna S. Sipes,**
J.D., of San Diego,
California, are identical
twins and authors of the
book *Dancing Naked in
Front of the Fridge and
Other Lessons from
Twins.*



twin sisters Amy and Amanda came home from the hospital. Taryn is lucky. Her mom Becky is the older sister of a set of twins. Becky understands what it is like to be in Taryn's position. This made Becky very thoughtful and attentive to Taryn's feelings. Becky was also president of the San Diego Movin' Up Moms of Multiples Club, so she had a great handle on twinship from a couple of angles. We think the Hames' family strategies teach valuable lessons for blending twins with their siblings.

"My mom has always made me feel special. From the beginning, she taught me to be the 'Big Sister.' I learned to change their diapers and help when they cried. I liked my role as Mom's helper," Taryn recalled. Becky succeeded in the goal of keeping Taryn from feeling isolated.

PART OF THE GROUP

Back in the 1940s, Dr. Dorothy Burlingham was one of the first psychologists to observe twins and their siblings. She wrote, "Twins make an intimate pair, just as the parents do." Therefore, the non-twin child may start believing that the world is only made up of couples, and often can feel left out. The Hames family developed an innovative approach to battling the twin attention monster by making sure that Taryn always felt included.

When the girls were very young, at birthday party time for Amy and Amanda, Taryn got to invite a friend. Grandma, more times than not, also slipped Taryn a small gift. Now, on any family outing, Taryn has the option of asking a friend to come along.

The conscious efforts the Hames family made to give Taryn her share of the attention paid off. Taryn feels close to both Amy and Amanda—though in different ways. "In some ways, I'm a little closer to Amanda because we both love sports. Amy would rather do other things. Right now, she's really into babysitting," Taryn told us.

We have found that it is normal for siblings of twins to migrate toward one twin, especially when they share the same interests. Just like with any brothers, sisters—or friends for that matter—we all tend to drift toward people who are like us. In addition, as Dr. Burlingham noticed, the number two is simply easier than three.

Taryn spent a few hours with us honestly reflecting on life with twins. She says it has its good and bad sides. She remembers being jealous when Amy and Amanda were small and got to do things exclusively with other twins in the twins club. "I felt I wasn't cool because I wasn't a twin," she told us hesitantly.

A FRESH OUTLOOK

But, over the years, Taryn has come to see that she has advantages by being the older sister. "I get privileges that they don't," she says "And besides, twinship has some disadvantages. Twins are misunderstood often, they have to share everything and there's that pressure of someone your same age in school."

There's probably no way to totally eliminate rivalry between siblings and twins. But, as we see with the Hames family, putting some careful thought into ways to help each child feel unique is good advice. It's worth the time and effort it takes to bring the other siblings into the inevitable spotlight that shines on the twins.

By the way, after our time with Taryn, we definitely think that she is cool—for a singleton. ♥



Continued from page 15

TODDLERS

variety of healthy foods available on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so that they could eat whenever hunger struck. At meal times the girls served themselves foods which they helped to set out on their table. Research tells us that when they are allowed to choose, children will eat what they truly need. Their choices during one day may not resemble a balanced diet but will balance over a longer stretch of time.

Once they were freed from the pressure of adult expectations the children became more interested in food and began to help prepare it. They mixed the frozen orange juice, measured rice into the cooking pot, spread peanut butter on bread. A messy process at first, but as their skills improved they became truly helpful in the kitchen. A favorite story in their family was Bread and Jam for Frances by Russell Hoban. Your little ones might enjoy it, too! ♥

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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Good Twin

by Patricia Malstrom

Crushing
the
Classic
Myth



BAD TWIN

My first encounter with the myth that twins come packaged as a pair—one good and one bad—came more than 20 years ago in my neighborhood supermarket. As I rolled a grocery cart carrying my 10-month-old twin daughters past a woman standing in front of the apple bin, she called after us, “Which one is the good one and which one is the bad one?” Speechless, I hurried our cart into the canned goods aisle. There I caught my breath, smiled at my two—who were busy untying each other’s shoelaces—and wondered how anyone could ask such a question.

Twins are up against the human penchant for comparing, contrasting and labeling. Since they are born a “matched set” so to speak, they are often appropriated as symbols of the good and bad in all of us. Ancient myths and modern movies are peopled with twins made to represent polar opposites. A well-known example is the Old Testament story about the twins, Jacob and Esau. Their mother, Rebecca, fueled a rivalry between them with far-reaching consequences because she favored the sensitive and cultivated Jacob over his more impulsive twin Esau.

Unfortunately, most people have more familiarity with twin myths than with living, breathing twins, who are, after all, just two little kids. As one mother of adult twin sons put it, “I was amazed at how good both my twins were. From an early age there was so much caring and compassion between them. If I offered one a cookie, he wouldn’t take it until he made sure there was a cookie for his brother, too. I tried, but could never seem to teach my single-born kids to be as thoughtful of each other.” She says she protected her boys from intrusive public scrutiny and twin myths while they were growing up by giving them distinctly different names. She never dressed them alike, and avoided any other emphasis on their twinship. Today they are both professional musicians and best friends.

We parents have the job of ensuring that our multiples have a chance to fulfill themselves, to grow up to develop their individual potentials—those that are the same and those that are different. To do that we need to rid ourselves of any myths lurking in the back of our own minds and, unlike the biblical Rebecca, resist any impulse we might have to favor one over the other.

Susie Robertson, president of her local twins club, says that she is surprised by the number of members who say one of their newborn twins is easy-going and one is fussy. The mothers tell her that it’s very hard to fall in love with the baby who needs special handling. They worry that they will bond only with the easy-going child. She reassures them that this too shall pass. As babies mature, colic and fussing fade away, mom’s energy picks up and life in the hurricane becomes more manageable. It may take a bit longer, but love will grow between mom and dad and all of the kids.

While few parents believe the myth of a good twin-bad twin split, some fall into the trap of contrasting their twins’ personality

traits and abilities—easy and difficult, pretty and smart. Of course, there are times when any parent becomes disenchanted with one over the other—a colicky baby is no picnic; nor is a cranky, rebellious toddler. Wise parents keep these feelings to themselves. When they speak of differences between their twin children, they translate them into positives and avoid negative labels. “Amy has so much energy. Lila stays calm no matter what.” “Harold is a planner. Todd’s the engineer.”

Some parents have to go to bat for their babies right from the start. A mother of preemies told me that when her own mother saw the larger of her tiny newborn grandsons for the first time, she declared, “This one’s a bruiser. He’s going to beat up the little one.” At that the young mom burst into tears and told her mother, “Don’t you ever speak that way again.” Fortunately, grandmother learned quickly and has cooperated ever since.

Within the family, parents can control their own behavior and perhaps sway the relatives. But there’s no easy way to protect our multiples from inappropriate questions and comments of their classmates, teachers, coaches and strangers. The best defense is to demonstrate a positive attitude about twinship and about any differences between your children.

A mother of 12-year-old boys told me that friends of their family rank the boys according to their own preferences. For example, their sporting friends rate her athletic son higher than his left-handed twin who loves music. Her twins and their classmates have a hard time understanding that different does not mean good and bad. She tells them over and over that their differences are OK. They are two separate people with different talents. Whenever one of her boys has a particularly hard time, she takes a step back and thinks as if she were on a job—to help each develop their own self-esteem. And she makes sure that the boys’ teachers and coaches understand each boy’s special talents, too. Her boys may not understand everything their mother tells them now, but her words and actions demonstrate a model they can use when they encounter the myth on their own.

Perhaps you and your family will never experience a version of this myth, but if you do, be ready with a positive attitude. If I could roll back the clock, I know now just what I would say to that woman in the supermarket, “Oh these are both good girls!” ❤️

Patricia Malstrom founded *Twin Services* and is co-author of *The Art of Parenting Twins*. She is mother to four adult children, including identical twins.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Clear your head of myths.
- Avoid labeling the children.
- Teach them that they are neither carbon copies nor opposites.
- Encourage each child to develop his or her strengths, same or different.
- Disapprove of bad behavior, but not the child.
- Speak up for the children when necessary.
- Praise them when they stick up for each other.
- Find help if you feel overwhelmed.

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Getting Out of the House with Twins

by Christina Baglivi-Tinglof



With the dog days of summer now here, I'm desperately searching for ideas on what to do in August with my young brood. Every day I try to add another kid-friendly venue within a 100-mile radius to my growing list—parks, museums, the movies. (Would a trip to the Mojave Desert really be too hot now?)

You see if we're not on the go, my three sons, eight-year-old fraternal twins and a six-year-old, will eventually wear me down. I can see it now—my husband comes home one evening to find me curled up on the floor in a dark corner muttering, "This, too, shall pass. This, too, shall pass," while my kids sit unaware and wide-eyed in front of a blaring TV watching their 200th Tom and Jerry cartoon.

It's the plight of every parent who stays home with her kids full time. And, unfortunately, often parents of multiples feel the brunt of isolation and frustration even more intensely as it seems nearly impossible to get out the door on some days. Granted, I have lots more options now that my twins are older. For instance, they'll actually sit in their seats to watch the movie as opposed to crawling across the sticky, soda-stained floor or won't run in opposite directions at the park just to watch the look of exasperation on my face. Yet when I was a new mom of twins, I also felt the inaccessibility and loneliness. But I quickly figured out that I would have to make my own fun with the kids and that meant sucking it up and getting out the door with them, no matter how difficult. As I look back I'm proud that I never let having young twins stop me from doing just about anything with them. And you shouldn't either.

When they were just six months old, for instance, we flew alone on a plane to Reno where my sister was attending a convention. (OK, so it was a short plane ride and I had booked them each a seat, but it was a huge feat nonetheless.) We took the twins everywhere, even to the hottest restaurants in town. During those evenings, I learned to rock them back and forth to sleep in their stroller with one hand while balancing a glass of wine in the other.

Once after four days of solid rain and thinking if I didn't get out of the house I'd lose my mind, I grabbed a clear plastic tarp from the garage and an umbrella, packed my then toddlers into the car and

headed for downtown. Once there I covered the top of their double stroller in plastic and strolled down the street. We stopped in a bookstore, got a bit of ice cream, and danced in the music shop. It was a great day, one that surely saved my sanity.

Even when I was pregnant (I mean really pregnant) with my third son, I took my multiples to Chuck E Cheese's. (What was I thinking?) When they insisted on crawling through the play tunnels, I felt I needed to follow along. After all, they were only two years old at the time. It wasn't a pretty sight—two fast moving toddlers trailed by a middle-age mom with heavy backpack and bulging stomach barely able to fit through the tubes.

That was one of many trying times—I have the gray hairs and perspiration-stained shirts to prove it—but with each new outing, my confidence grew. I diligently planned and prepared the night before (good maps and a good stroller are a must), and often relied on close friends with lots of sick days stock piled at work to tag along, and more importantly, the kindness of strangers. Regardless of how the rest of the world may view us at the moment, Americans are indeed the friendliest people on the planet. I've had strangers help me lug a loaded double stroller down a flight of stairs (can't remember how I got myself into that predicament), hold doors for me, carry heavy parcels to my car, and even loan me cash when I had forgotten my wallet. It was all because they had a soft spot in their heart for the brave mother of multiples.

My can-do sense of adventure does run deep, though. I remember my mom, a stay-at-home parent, took me everywhere when I was young. She used to love to tell the story of how back in the early 1960s she stood in line for three hours at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City just so she could show my two young sisters and me a glimpse of DaVinci's Mona Lisa on loan from the Louvre. Now standing in line for three hours with twins would be a lesson in patience (could you imagine triplets?), and traveling by airplane with infant twins may be a bit much, but the point is clear—just get up and go. The benefits to everyone are too great. Not only will you feel a sense of renewal and accomplishment (even if the day doesn't go as smoothly as you had hoped), but also you'll be teaching your children about their world around them. If you start taking them out when they're little, they'll adapt to nearly every social situation sooner rather than later. The only way to teach children how to behave in public is to take them out in public. Don't let children—especially multiples—keep you from venturing outside.

Now load up that diaper bag and go plan that great summer adventure.

Christina Tinglof is creator and editor of *Talk About Twins*, and the author of five books including *Double Duty: The Parents' Guide to Raising Twins*, from Pregnancy through the School Years (2nd Edition), and *Parenting School-Age Twins and Multiples*.

10 Tips on Avoiding Going 'Goofy' at Disney

by Maisie Knowles

I just returned from a spontaneous weekend trip to Disneyland with my husband and two daughters. Most of my friends thought we were crazy and, in hindsight, we may have been! We had a great time touring Disneyland and we'll always remember meeting Mickey and Minnie Mouse. However, I learned a lot from this trip and the next time we make a visit to the "happiest place on earth," I'll spend more time planning. So to help other mothers plan a more perfect Disneyland getaway, I put together several tips based on the lessons I learned during this experience.

Character Dining

1 Make the most of your time at the park and skip the "Meet and Greet" lines for Disney characters. Waiting in the "Meet and Greet" lines doesn't always guarantee you'll meet your character of choice. Opt instead for Character Dining, where your twins are guaranteed to get an up-close encounter with their favorite character. You'll find these opportunities at:

- Disneyland Park - Plaza Inn Disney California Adventure - Ariel's Disney Princess Celebration
- Disneyland Hotel - Goofy's Kitchen
- Grand Californian - Storytellers Breakfast
- Paradise Pier Hotel - PCH Grill Breakfast

Best Time To Go

2 Crowds are overwhelming during school holidays and three-day weekends. The summer months are extremely busy as well, but the park is open longer and most of the rides and attractions are operating. Try Sundays, when the park is usually less busy. January and February weekdays are the least busy times, but the park is open fewer hours.

Fast Pass and Rider Swap Tips

3 Every Disneyland ticket comes with the opportunity to receive Fast Passes for specified rides. A Fast Pass will give you a return-time window so you can skip the standby line and head to the front. If used correctly, Fast Passes allow you to maximize your time at the park. Usage is complex, however, so make sure you know all the rules before buying a pass.

Cheap Tickets

4 Discounts on Disneyland tickets are hard to find. If you purchase your tickets online in advance, you can save a couple dollars through travel sites like Priceline, Expedia, Orbitz and Disneyland.com.

Discount Disney Gift Cards

5 Before your trip to Disneyland, buy discount Disney gift cards on GiftCardGranny.com and save up to 10 percent at Disneyland's ticket counters, stores, restaurants and food stands.

If you're willing to take a risk, however, you might try buying tickets on eBay. Alternately, you can try hitting up a cast member for the complimentary passes they receive (make sure you tip) or ask patrons leaving the park if you can have their tickets. Look for the most expensive tickets that haven't been signed.

Time to Ride

6 People tend to head to the right side first when entering the park, so go to the left side of the park in the morning. The rides with height restrictions had smaller lines first thing in

the morning during our visit. Another good time to ride is during parades and firework shows, but be aware that some will close. You also might check with your hotel to see if they offer extended Disney hours.

7 Strollers

Tie a brightly colored ribbon to the stroller so you can locate it more easily. You'll also want to write your name on a piece of tape and hide somewhere on the stroller for identification in case of theft.

Don't lock strollers to anything or leave them in one spot for an extended period, as cast members will remove them.

8 Baby Care Centers

The Baby Care Centers at Disneyland are located at the end of Main Street. At Disney California Adventure, you'll find it next to the Mission Tortilla Factory in the Pacific Wharf. The centers include rocking chairs, nursing rooms, filtered water for formula, changing tables, etc. There's also a kiosk that sells diaper-changing kits and such basic baby-care items as food and formula.

9 Save on Food

Even though there are plenty of food kiosks at Disney, you'll find most food is overpriced. Instead, pack food in a cooler and store it in a locker. If you're traveling from out of town, there's a Target less than a mile away from Disneyland where you can stock up on supplies. Be sure your hotel has a mini fridge, if you plan on storing cold food items during your stay.

If you're traveling with older children, buy a discounted gift card for them to use in place of cash when they're touring the park on their own.

10 Save on Pictures

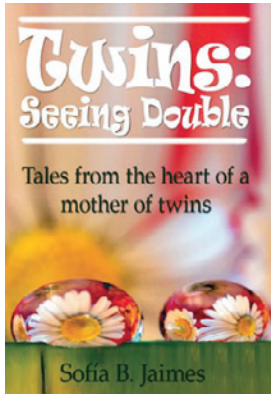
Park photographers will give you a Photo Pass so you can view your pictures online and pay between \$10 and \$30 for prints. Instead, use the Photo Pass to view your photos, then download a screenshot.

To read the full story "How To Avoid Going Goofy At Disneyland" please visit <http://www.freeshipping.org/blog/how-to-avoid-going-goofy-at-disneyland/>. ♥



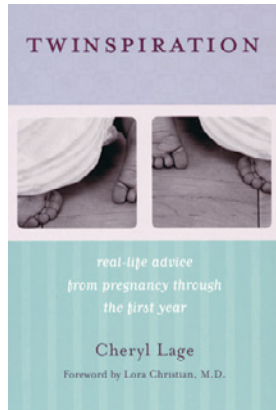
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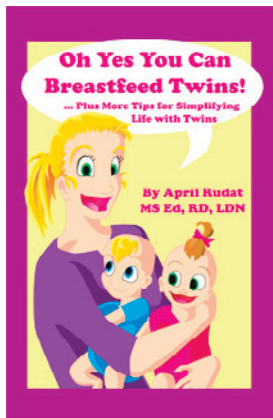
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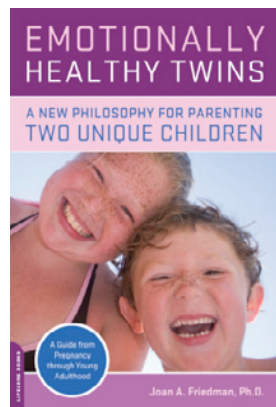
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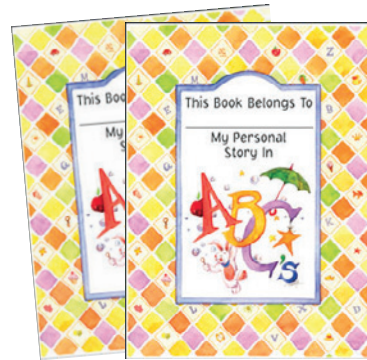
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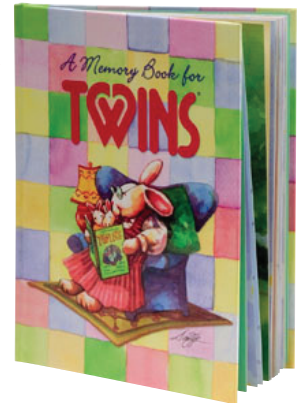
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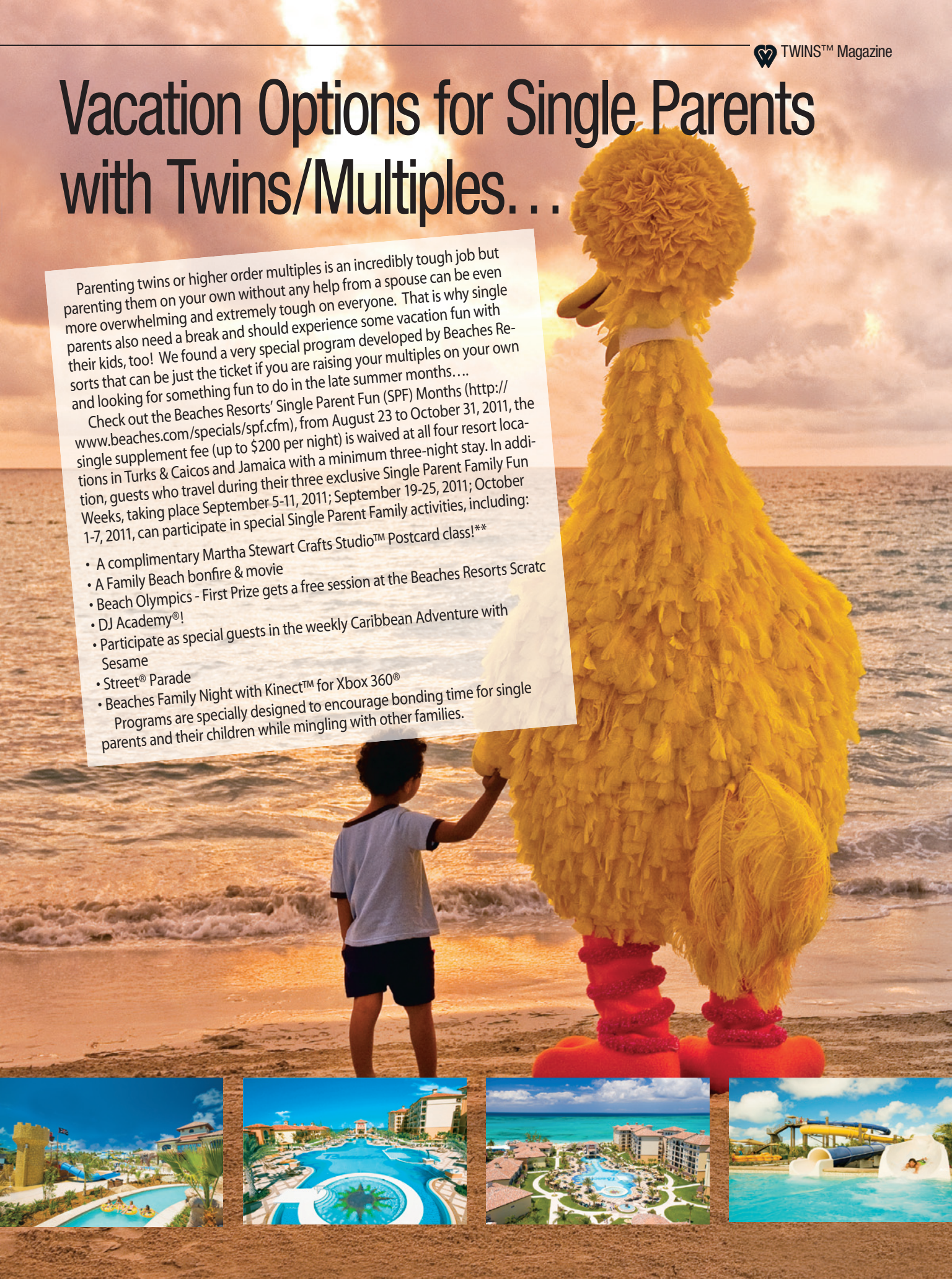
Vacation Options for Single Parents with Twins/Multiples...

Parenting twins or higher order multiples is an incredibly tough job but parenting them on your own without any help from a spouse can be even more overwhelming and extremely tough on everyone. That is why single parents also need a break and should experience some vacation fun with their kids, too! We found a very special program developed by Beaches Resorts that can be just the ticket if you are raising your multiples on your own and looking for something fun to do in the late summer months....

Check out the Beaches Resorts' Single Parent Fun (SPF) Months (<http://www.beaches.com/specials/spf.cfm>), from August 23 to October 31, 2011, the single supplement fee (up to \$200 per night) is waived at all four resort locations in Turks & Caicos and Jamaica with a minimum three-night stay. In addition, guests who travel during their three exclusive Single Parent Family Fun Weeks, taking place September 5-11, 2011; September 19-25, 2011; October 1-7, 2011, can participate in special Single Parent Family activities, including:

- A complimentary Martha Stewart Crafts Studio™ Postcard class!***
- A Family Beach bonfire & movie
- Beach Olympics - First Prize gets a free session at the Beaches Resorts Scratch!
- DJ Academy®!
- Participate as special guests in the weekly Caribbean Adventure with Sesame Street® Parade
- Beaches Family Night with Kinect™ for Xbox 360®

Programs are specially designed to encourage bonding time for single parents and their children while mingling with other families.





DOUBLE SPEAK DILEMMA

by Craig Chappelow

As if it weren't already difficult enough being the father of multiples on a day-to-day basis, I just discovered something that has fractured the very foundation of my value system. What I realized is this: women lie all the time. Apparently this is completely accepted, if not expected, in the world of women. The kinds of lies that I am referring to are not the kind that would land a woman in jail or subject her to a tax audit. These are lies that women tell for the preservation of peace and the overall good of global society. Here is how it works: women mean one thing, but (here comes the tricky part) they say the opposite.

Craig Chappelow of Greensboro, N.C., is a product director at the Center for Creative Leadership and is a father of three, including twin boys.

Take this example. One woman, we'll call her Lisa, sees her co-worker, Mona, walking down the hallway toward her. Lisa notices that Mona has a new haircut. It is so ragged and patchy that it looks like it could be the result of severe radiation poisoning. Lisa and Mona pass in the hallway. Let's listen in:

Lisa: "Hey, you got your hair cut."

Mona: "Thanks."

As a guy, you probably missed the complex set of falsehoods and half-truths that lay just below the surface of this conversation. Ha. I used to be just like you—naïve, believing everything I heard, taking the comments of women at face value. But now, I am much wiser. Please, allow me to translate this interaction for you.

Lisa: "That is the worst haircut I have ever seen, and I'm trying very hard not to stare at it. You look like Genghis Khan."

Mona: "I know it is awful, but I paid \$80.00 for it, and I'm just going to wait for it to go away."

Lisa: "I agree, it is horrendous, but the same thing may happen to me someday, so I am being supportive."

Mona: "Thanks, I'm glad we had this little talk."

Once I cracked this code, I realized that women lie to me all the time. But, being a guy, I was not able to hear it. Their criticisms and barbs bounced off me like the ultra high frequency from a dog whistle.

I can remember times when, while spending time out in public with my 2-year-old twin boys and their 4-year-old brother, women would compliment me on my care and attentiveness to my kids. And I thought they meant it. Sucker! Now I recognize their comments for what they are—a mixture of pity and skepticism carefully wrapped in a thin veneer of care and compliments. I do not fall for it anymore and neither should you, dads!

Fathers of twins must strive to become more defensive listeners. Otherwise we all wander through the rest of our lives slack-jawed and naïve, taking comments at face value in a sad, literal existence. In the interest of rescuing other dads from this fate, I have put together this handy translator for your use.

So be alert and do not be drawn into the comments of women without conducting a careful analysis. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. By the way, may I say

that you look just as young, fit and handsome as you did before your twins were born? And I really mean that. I am so glad we had this little talk.

DAD OF TWINS TRANSLATOR....

More of what women say and what they 'really' mean

What they tell you: "Twins MUST run in your family"

What they 'really' mean: "You probably took fertility treatments."

What they tell you: "What beautiful twins!"

What they 'really' mean: "They don't look anything like you."

What they tell you: "This must have brought you and your wife closer"

What they 'really' mean: "During the fertility treatments, did you have to give your wife shots in the butt?"

What they tell you: "Does your wife still work?"

What they 'really' mean: "I am a radical feminist who hates you and the correct answer better be yes, after all you did to her."

What they tell you: "Which one was born first?"

What they 'really' mean: "I have run out of things to talk to you about."

What they tell you: "Does flying bother their ears?"

What they 'really' mean: "Please, dear God, don't make me sit near those kids on this airplane."

What they tell you: "I always thought I would love to have this sideshow of yours for 15 minutes"

What they 'really' mean: "That is, until I watched your little twins."

What they tell you: "Do you always dress them so cute?"

What they 'really' mean: "Shouldn't that one be wearing pants, too?"

What they tell you: "You and your wife must have a strong relationship."

What they 'really' mean: "What's it like to know you will never have sex again?"

What they tell you: "It must be expensive raising twins."

What they 'really' mean: "Especially after all of those fertility treatments."

What they tell you: "I'll bet your home is busy!"

What they 'really' mean: "I'll bet your home smells like a stable."

What they tell you: "This must be your chance to bond with your sons."

What they 'really' mean: "This must be your weekend for custody." ❤️



For the *Love* of Scotch Tape

by Dori Robinson



Eight years ago today I became a mother for the first time - twice - when Roan and Posey came into the world. I know every mother has prego stories, and I'm no exception. However, I'm completely bored with the thought of discussing morning sickness and swollen ankles and buying undies of an alarmingly large size (but golly PETE, have you seen those undies???) Rather, this is a reflection on the journey Roan and Posey and I made together to reach that first May 18th.

I think every mother worth her salt loves to celebrate the birth-days of her children. For me, I have twice the joy and twice the gratitude...and not just because I have twice the children. Roan and Posey came early - way too early, and it's no exaggeration when I say that they are little miracles. Although I don't always show it...like when Posey asks me why I never comb my hair (usually on my way to work), or when Roan makes the armpit fart sound for the 216th time at the dinner table....today I am simply wallowing in it.

I am the second sister in my family to become pregnant with twins. For all those pesky people who want to know, no, we didn't use fertility. We are just fertile. My brother-in-law once, and only once, due to the wrath he suffered . . .proudly referred to us as (Double Yolkers.) Sister Darci had twin girls ten years before me. And, as is typical of Darc, she sailed right through the pregnancy with her belly blazing a way through Wal-Mart aisles across Iowa. At 39 weeks she was induced and my ultra cool nieces were born. They were big and healthy and beautiful. I was quite confident that I would have the same experience. I had apparently forgotten that Darci and I have many similarities, but vast differences. For example, while Darci was helping my Dad chop firewood, I was inside highlighting interesting passages in the Encyclopedia Britannica. While she was racing a mini-bike around our backyard, I was wearing a skirt on my head and impersonating Crystal Gayle in the living room, complete with candlestick microphone. When someone needed a babysitter, or a house sitter, or someone to cleverly design their new kitchen cabinets, they called Darci. The only reason anyone called me was to see if Darci was home. Regardless, I felt certain that even my affiliation with Wonder Darci would work in my favor.

So imagine my surprise when, at 20 weeks, I went into labor. Instead of having baby showers and nesting, I was rushed to the hospital that day, and there I stayed. In fact, I was a full-time resident until the very day I reached 29 weeks, which just happened to be May 18th, 2003.

I met other women while in the hospital who relished their bedrest. They knitted sweaters and wrote long letters to their grandmothers. They played online games, designed baby announcements, watched soap operas every morning and napped every afternoon. They were peaceful and relaxed. And I wanted to punch them in their smiling, pregnant cow faces. Didn't they realize that the world was going on outside? And we were missing it? Didn't they know I had a surgery center to run, parties to attend, and a nursery to decorate? And didn't they lay in bed in fear every night, as I did, and worry obsessively that their babies would fly out of their uterus at any moment if they so much as sneezed? Clearly, they did not. I retreated to my room and entered a phase

that is best described as The Great Depression.

Under normal circumstances, I'm just not the lay-around-and-relax kind of gal. I'm more of the run-your-ass-off-all-the-time variety. So when my activity was suddenly, completely, unilaterally curtailed, I became a nasty little prego—a caged animal on a double dose of hormones, if you will. For some reason I still cannot explain, the only item that temporarily soothed my inner beast was Scotch tape. Poor Sister Deidra was living nearby at that time, and she became not only my link to the outside world, but my supplier. She would speed to the hospital after putting in a full day at a demanding job, and spend her evenings engaged in such fine activities as helping me pee in a bed pan, inspecting my belly button at my insistence to see if she could see the babies coming out, rubbing my feet, opening and then closing the curtains at my whim, fetching pudding, then a spoon, then a different spoon, damn it, didn't I say spoon not a spork?, then a different flavor of pudding. When she finally escaped my clutches and walked (or ran, God love her) down the hall, I would snatch up my phone and dial her mobile. And I would sob uncontrollably. When she would ask me what I needed, the only thing I could squeak out in reply was, "MORE TAPE!!!!!" She brought it to me in packages, in rolls, in dispensers... colored tape, double-sided tape and even scented tape. Dr. Seuss could write a series of books about my love of tape and its' many uses. To this day, she and I cannot enter a Fred Meyer or a Target together without her instinctively turning to me and asking, "Dor, do you need any tape?"

Almost nine weeks and nine gazillion rolls of Scotch tape later, Roan and Posey made their debut. At the ripe old age of 31, I was convinced that I had seen and done all that mattered, and that kids were like icing on an already very satisfying cake. And then came that moment... the moment when they held up my teeny, tiny Posey and I looked into her enormous blue eyes for the first time. I was lost and found and everything in between. Just one minute later, I had the same experience while gazing into Roan's sleepy brown eyes, already fringed with to-die-for lashes. I was forever changed. In the span of two minutes, in an operating room in Salt Lake City, I became a mother. Had I not been numb from the chest down, I would have leapt off the table and wildly hugged every pregnant cow face in the hospital.

Eight years later, with my kids tucked into their beds and my sisters and I wildly texting each other into the wee hours, my heart smiles. I don't think parenthood is for everyone, and I will be the first one to support your right to remain childless. But I'm grateful for every fingerprinted window, eye roll, dental bill and call from the teacher, because each one reminds me that I am the lucky mother of two vibrant, sassy buck-toothed kids who defied all the odds to be here today. Happy Birthday, Roan and Posey. ♥

Amanda Hamm lives in North Carolina. She is the author of *Double Take: My First Year as a Mother of Twins*.



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