

The Magazine for Multiples Since 1984

September/October 2015

TWINS™

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**When Colic
Comes in Twos**
Tips to Help!

**How Much
Sleep Do Your
Preschool
Twins Really
Need?**



**BEDTIME
BATTLES**
and the Path
to Victory

**THE MYTHS OF
MOTHERHOOD**

**Nutrition
Guidelines for
FOSTERING A
HEALTHY TWIN
PREGNANCY**



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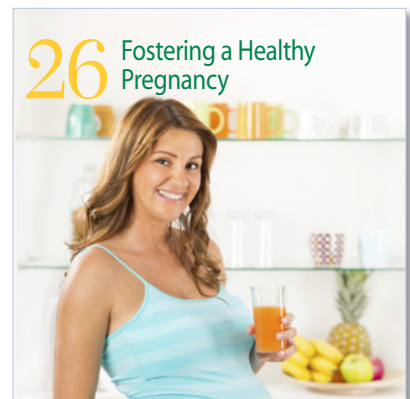
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On the Cover:



Introducing 11-month-old identical twins Aubrey Jean and Giana Lee from Lowell, Indiana. They were born 5 weeks premature on October 26th, 2014 and have an impeccable bond. They love to play together, especially outside in the grass or at the park and they enjoy giving each other kisses. You can often find them chasing each other around the living room and giggling. They say "mama", "dada" and "baba" and will be big sisters in April of next year. Proud parents Loren and Dustin say that the girls are very loving, happy babies who show great interest in learning new things. They love to dance and clap and wave. Music makes them happy and they stop what they are doing at the first sound of a song and they begin to smile and giggle and try to sing along. They snuggle and hug and you can see the strong twin bond in everything they do.

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I just love this time of year! It's so nice when the weather starts getting a bit cooler and all the leaves on the trees begin to change to beautiful orange, red and gold works of art. It has always been a favorite time of year in our home because we make it an annual tradition to hit the local pumpkin patches and corn mazes for some good old fashioned fall family fun! I encourage all of you to take advantage of all the fun local fall activities and festivals where you live because your kids will love it and they will be all grown up before you know it.

This year because my fraternal twin boys are in their senior year of high school, it will be filled with many "lasts"... "their last 1st day of school" "last Varsity Soccer game" last Wrestling match", etc. Along with that also means double ACT tests and double college applications and everything else this final year of high school brings. One major milestone we recently experienced was getting their senior pictures taken. I didn't realize how emotional this experience would be for me. While watching them pose for their pictures and seeing the wonderful, handsome young men standing before me, it really hit me hard... this is it! They are almost adults and will soon be heading off on their own... It will be such a different dynamic in our house without them there, too! How will my younger singleton boys react to the missing energy in our home? How will I handle it? For me, my schedule will clear up substantially... I mean it will be easy with just two to run around. No more running back and forth to the high school or attending all their numerous choir concerts and sporting events. Even though it can be hectic having four boys in three different schools (high school; middle school and elementary) I know I will miss this special time of my life and long for the days when they all lived under one roof.

I feel like they just started high school yesterday and now here we are... rolling through their senior year! Truth be told, I feel like it was just yesterday when they started Kindergarten! I am amazed how fast the time really has gone by. When people tell you this, please believe them! I can remember years ago while attending my local twins club meeting, I would hear some of the "seasoned" moms talk about this very same topic and for me to enjoy every moment. I wanted to listen, I really did... But, at that time, my boys were toddlers



and were running in separate directions and I couldn't even imagine them going to school, let alone graduating from high school! Life is tricky that way. You get so caught up in the day-to-day business of life: paying bills, doing laundry, raising kids, running a busy schedule (so busy it would make even busy people run) life starts passing you by and your kids keep growing and getting older. You think you will have all the time in the world. Let me tell you... you won't. So please put your phone down and enjoy your kids now! Don't waste a single opportunity to spend more time with your kids when they are young because the time you invest in them now will be time you will get back later in life and it will provide memories they will cherish for a lifetime.

Inside this issue we cover some interesting topics like the great vaccination debate; bedtime battles with your toddlers; when colic comes in twos what to do and we include nutrition recommendations for moms carrying two or more. We also explore the myths of motherhood and provide some good information about sleep cycles in the article, "How much sleep do your preschool twins really need?" As always we are excited to feature 40 sets of twins in our Double Takes section with a fall-theme and this issue we have a brand new column called "Life with Twins" where we introduce you to parents of multiples that have just launched a new internet pod-cost!

We thank you our loyal readers for your continued support for TWINS as we get ready to head into our 32nd year of being the world-leading resource for parenting twins, triplets and higher order multiples! We hope you enjoy this issue!



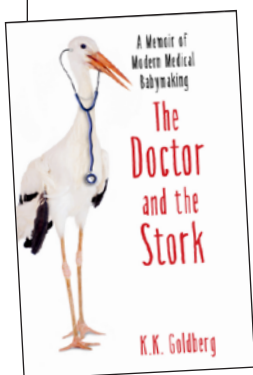
Sincerely,

Christa Reed

Christa Reed, Editor-in-Chief
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NEW PRODUCTS

The Doctor and The Stork...New Book About Twins is Now Available:



There are more than 150,000 twin births every year, and over five million IVF babies have been born since the technology's inception. In this timely and compelling memoir, K.K. Goldberg offers a unique, first-hand, week-by-week reflection upon that journey—the roller coaster of a high-tech conception and high-risk multiple pregnancy. With the author's eccentric family and wry humor in the mix, this is a universally relatable story that's hard to put down.

"Not just a smart and funny book about twins—a smart and funny book," wrote bestselling author Pamela Druckerman, on reading *The Doctor and The Stork*.

Now available in stores and on Amazon (<http://www.amazon.com/The-Doctor-Stork-Medical-Babymaking/dp/1631528300>) \$12.79

Milestone Baby Cards Launches New Baby Set for Twins!



Milestone Cards, the creators of the original photo cards to celebrate life's precious moments, are introducing a new baby set just for twins! These new photo cards are the perfect way for parents to photograph important moments from that two cute first year. Simply position the card with the twins, snap a photo, and the memory is instantly captured. The photo can be added to a scrapbook or shared on social media with friends and family. Milestone Cards is the first company to offer parents photo cards for developmental milestones with 30 photo cards to capture previ-



ous firsts like the day the twins come home and the first day they smile at each other! Suggested Retail: \$34; Available on Amazon

Parents of Twins Invent New Product Called the Tubby Table!



These inventive, hard-working parents, Julie and Mary, say they feel so lucky that they could have kids, not to mention twins! While working in the toy and videogame businesses

in Red Bank, New Jersey, their fraternal twins were born. "I was 41 when I gave birth, six weeks premature," says Julie Gibbs, Co-Founder/President of Tubby Table Toys, Inc. Their son, Sam stayed in an incubator for a week because he was only 3 lbs 10 oz. but daughter Maddy was ready to come out, so by default Sam had to tag along. Now, they describe themselves as older Moms with 13-year-old twins.

A few years after their twins were born the family moved to Southern California to be closer to family and a soon after arriving they started Tubby Table Toys. "We decided that other Moms and Dads out there needed the Tubby Table, just like we did so they worked hard to make it happen and now this new product is available for other parents!

ABOUT TUBBY TABLE: Kids get dirty. They need a bath. Then it's off to sleep. That's basic Parenthood 101. But not every child is keen on getting in the tub long enough to get the dirty job done. Add a rubber ducky and some bubbles and it's just ho-hum. Until now! The new Tubby Table (\$39.99) will entice little ones to look forward to bath time. This ingenious activity table aids in developing fine motor skills while sitting up in a sudsy tub. Plus the specially designed table surface keeps the soapy water in the bath, not splashing onto the tiled floor! The results clean smiling kids and relaxed parents. How can one bath product do all this? First, Tubby Table was designed by moms with squirmy twins and expertise from the biggest toy manufacturers. Second, the New Tubby Table has play patterns based on input from parents. When ready to shop, click on their website at www.tubbytabletoys.com to see a list of retailers and sign up for Tubby Table Toys, Inc. email alerts to be the first to learn of specials and new products.

SantaSentMeAletter.com celebrates 8th Season!



Launched in 2007 when founder Kelly Easterling saw the excitement a letter from Santa Claus brought to his young son several weeks before Christmas, Kelly realized that other parents would love to bring such joy to their children

to get them into the holiday spirit, and so SantaSentMeALetter.com was born. Now entering its eighth season, the business, still 100% family-owned and operated, has provided thousands of families all over the world with fully customized and personalized letters from Santa Claus. And at a time when getting mail has become a novelty, what kid doesn't like to get an actual letter?

With 20 exclusive templates to choose from (including religious and non-religious, a letter for adults, and even a letter to Jewish children from Santa), parents and family members can use the Online Letter Editor to completely personalize each letter to each child, right from the web site. Every letter is then delivered on Santa's own custom stationery (available only at SantaSentMeALetter.com), guaranteeing that each is unique and "authentic." Santa signs and wax seals each letter by hand before postmarking it directly from the North Pole. Parents can even add an optional Nice List card or a Magic Key that Santa uses to give gifts to children in homes that don't have chimneys.

MULTIPLES ILLUMINATED CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS: MULTIPLES ANTHOLOGY

Megan Woolsey and Alison Lee, both writers and mothers of multiples (triplets and twins respectively), are calling writers who would like to contribute a personal essay and/or advice on their experience with infertility, pregnancy and the first couple of years

of raising multiples for their upcoming anthology: *Multiples Illuminated: An Anthology of Stories and Advice from Parents with Twins, Triplets and More* that brings together the world of multiples through shared experiences. They want you to make them laugh, cry, think, and help them learn about multiples through your words.

Original essays only. Submissions open: September 1, 2015 to November 1, 2015 / Word Count: 800 - 2,000

They would love to read your stories that touch on any of the following topics:

- Infertility - trials, tribulations, triumphs
- Family and friends' reactions to your big news
- Humorous or heartwarming about your multiples pregnancy
- Preparations for having multiples
- Beautiful or humorous stories about your delivery
- Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) trials and triumphs
- Coping with newborn multiples
- Financial impact of caring for multiples
- Milestones (walking, talking, etc.)
- Multiple siblings bonds
- Funny stories about things people say to parents of multiples

This is just a guideline; feel free to write about your unique experience with being a parent of multiples.

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by Erin Pacheco

The Balancing Act of a Working M.O.M.

Erin Pacheco is a mother of 10 month old twin boys, wife to husband Chris, a 4th grade Reading/ELA teacher, and a graduate student at The University of Texas at Arlington pursuing Educational Leadership.



From the moment your twins arrive you are engulfed with love and excitement for your new additions. For those of us M.O.M.s (mothers of multiples) who will be returning to work, there is also a looming feeling in the back of our minds. Knowing that we will have to be away from our little ones in a few weeks or months brings with it a set of burning questions: How will I handle being away from my babies all day? Who is going to watch my children? How do I balance all my responsibilities at work while still making time for my family?

Although returning to work may seem like an impossible feat, it can be accomplished with ample planning and flexibility.

The first step is getting your children on a schedule. It doesn't have to be perfect, just a foundation you can build upon. I remember when my boys were about 2 months old. I thought, there has to be an easier way to do this. One was up, the other was asleep. They were awake a majority of the night. My husband and I were completely exhausted. That was one of those moments when I questioned my ability to return to work full-time.

Our pediatrician was able to offer insight on adjusting their schedule in a way that would better meet our needs as a family. We were able to determine the amount of sleep and the boys' nutritional needs for their age and work within their natural schedule. He suggested gradually decreasing the amount of time the boys were sleeping during the day allowing them to sleep longer at night. He also recommended switching to a formula bottle at night if breastfeeding during the day; the formula takes longer to digest, allowing little ones to feel full longer. This was a game changer. Even catching another hour or two of sleep was life changing. I was still tired, but not quite the zombie I had been when the boys were newborns.

Childcare is a must for returning to work. It may seem like a daunting task, but the most important aspect is research. First, determine your budget, then align your expectations. Daycare centers were out of our price range. After speaking with our pediatrician he recommended at home childcare. We were provided a website through the state that included at home daycares located nearby. The website listed if the homecare provider was licensed through the state along with a list of infractions/reprimands. You can even modify your search to zip code locations if you wanted a provider near your work or home. We searched for providers in our area and found several that fit our needs.

Prior to interviewing care providers, my husband and I had a conversation about expectations and the criteria for the perfect childcare provider. We set up interviews a month or two before I would return to work so we would have plenty of time to make a decision.

We prepared questions to ask the caregivers and took the boys with us to each of the interviews. We were able to get a good read on the individuals from their responses to our set questions and

the way they interacted with our children. For us, the most expensive provider was not one I would ever trust with my children. She was cold and seemed to run her daycare more like a business than a place to nurture children. Another provider had a side business and we were worried that would interfere with her attention to our little guys. Our last interview turned out to be the perfect fit.

In the end, go with your gut. You have to decide what YOU will be most comfortable with. The most important thing to consider in making a final decision about childcare is the safety and well-being of your children.

If you are having a family member watch your babies while you work, set up clear expectations from the beginning. Discuss concerns you would have regarding the care of your children like pay, hours, and discipline. It is extremely important to keep lines of communication between your children's caregiver and yourself open so you are sure your kiddos are receiving the best care possible. As wonderful as it is to spend less to no money on childcare, you have to determine the best fit for your family. If for some reason you get into a disagreement with the family member caring for your children, you are left without childcare.

My husband and I also discussed our responsibilities upon my return to work. We discussed drop off and pick up at daycare, feeding, bathing and anything else we could trouble shoot in the beginning. We decided that I would attend to the boys' needs: feeding, bathing, and changing, while he would be in charge of washing and making bottles for the next day and dinner.

This system worked okay for a couple weeks and then exhaustion took over. My husband became overwhelmed with his tasks and irritable. We had to make adjustments. When I got home from

This was a game changer. Even catching another hour or two of sleep was life changing.

work I would soak the bottles in the sink and prep what I could for dinner. The most important aspect to consider is

shared responsibilities and adjusting those responsibilities to the expectations and relationship you have already built with your partner.

One aspect to consider is your children's' feeding needs. Whether breastfeeding, pumping, or using formula you must have a plan for bottle preparation and storage. I had flexibility in my schedule where I was able to pump twice at work. That worked for a few weeks, but due to the demands of my schedule I decided to cut my pumping down to an amount that was a manageable amount for my family and I.

All of this information can be helpful, but what it really comes down to is what works best for you and your family. Friends and family are quick to offer advice, but unless they have lived your life, they don't understand 100% of what you are going through. Build a support system of those that you trust and that can help you in a bind. Don't forget to take time for yourself, your partner, and have fun with your kids. If you are doing the best you can for your little ones than you are already doing a great job! ♥



FUN NEW PODCAST

Features Parents of Twins

Alex is a 25 year old writer who resides in the English seaside county of West Sussex. As well as writing freelance for various platforms, he also heads up the creative department at a local radio station. If you are interested in finding out how he can throw some words in your direction, visit www.alexjamesfarnham.com, where you can find out more about his portfolio as well as his contact details.

by Alex James Farnham (www.alexjamesfarnham.com)



It may seem like a cliché, but a bit of laughter really can go a long, long way; especially when you direct it into a microphone and broadcast it on the internet in the form of a podcast!

There's a lot of tragedy in the world, but regardless of all the war, disease, famine, and injustice we see on the news, none of it really seems real until it hits us close to home. For this North Carolinian family of four, home was exactly where it hit, and after everything that was thrown their way, there was never a better reason to sit down, talk, laugh and reminisce about how they became one of the luckiest and blessed families in the world.

On September 4th, 2014, Bob and Katie McKnight gave birth to twins: Riley and Reagan. To Bob and Katie, these two little ones are living, breathing proof that even though sometimes things can look bleak, it's important to remember that in the end everything is going to be okay.

The McKnights tried for seven years to start a family, and tragically fell victim to two miscarriages, which both happened at six weeks. After multiple Doctor visits and countless referrals, Bob and Katie found their way to the fertility clinic. After a heap of tests, they underwent a round of Clomiphene and, almost immediately, fell pregnant with twins. What an ordeal! Thank goodness they made it through and the stress was all over, right? Hold on, they weren't quite out of the woods just yet.

At 22 weeks, Katie was put on bed rest. Then, at 28 weeks, she was admitted and stayed in hospital for preterm labor until the babies were born 8 weeks early at 32 weeks; Riley at 4lbs 13oz and Reagan at 4lbs 2oz. At the time of birth, Reagan had to be resuscitated. Both babies would then spend the next 29 days in the NICU, only to come home with heart monitors for the next five months.

At times of great stress, it's easy to sort of collapse into oneself and take it all on alone, with no means of release or relief. Bob and Katie knew they had each other, and they knew they could get through it, but what they didn't know was that by starting a podcast they weren't just finding an outlet

for their stress, they were reaching hundreds of people in multiple countries.

The Bob and Katie Show helped the couple during what I can only imagine was the most difficult time of their lives, and what really shines through is their ability to see the humor in day to day life. Whether it's Bob's unexpected antics in the big wide world of Walmart, or Katie's stories and struggles of trying to get anything done while juggling two mischievous little twins, it's plain to see that the only way these two were ever going to make it out was together.

There is a lot of love in the McKnight household, even with two extra little ones to share it with – but when you tune into the Bob and Katie Show you'll understand that this family's positive energy and happiness is infectious, and grows with every new episode – spreading to all its listeners.

We all have experiences where it's hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel, some worse than others, but Bob and Katie effortlessly remind us that the most important part of trawling through tough times is the ability to share your experiences, make light of past trauma, and most importantly, throw your head back and laugh. ❤️



**LISTEN UP:
The Bob and Katie Show**

A comedy Podcast where Bob and Katie talk about everything from itty bitty kick boxers to things you can't sell on eBay. Sit back and enjoy the show!

[facebook.com/thebobandkatieshow](https://www.facebook.com/thebobandkatieshow)

<http://www.buzzsprout.com/35986/308700-episode-25-bunnies-and-beer>





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by K.K. Goldberg



TEN THINGS I WISH I'D KNOWN WHEN I WAS PREGNANT WITH TWINS

Now that my twin boys are three years old, I look back on the advice, warnings, and forecasts I received from the moment I learned I would be gestating multiples. I've thought often about what I wish someone had told me then, as a complement to the fearful facts of medical risks and the chortled predictions of sleepless doom.

Here's my added input, distilled down to these ten ideas:

1 It's going to be okay, though your definition of okay will likely change. The minute you learn you're pregnant with twins, you'll probably also start to hear the statistical realities of higher risks and extra complications. Hardly anyone will tell you it's all going to be okay—but it will, because your understanding of what's okay will broaden. Okay might include the NICU, a C-section, or any number of things that weren't part of your original plan. You will get through it.

2 It's natural to be ambivalent. It's only human to be shocked and daunted by the fact that you will be gestating and then tending two new lives, rather than one. Many mainstream images of new motherhood involve a one-on-one mom-baby scenario, not a "football hold" double breastfeeding scene. Go ahead and balk. In every hero's journey, there's an initial turning away from the necessary task. This is part of your preparation. It will pass.

3 All the weird stuff people say to you is really about them. Carrying twins is not like a singleton pregnancy. Much of the advice and input you receive simply won't apply and will often be distressing. Whether it's a lecture on breastfeeding or the ominous "jokes" that you'll never sleep again, people are actually describing, however inappropriately, their own experiences and hang ups. They might not even recognize this, but you can, even through the haze of hormones.

4 People will emerge to support you. Many advise expectant mothers of twins to organize a “food tree” or to fill the freezer with ready-made meals. If you can, that’s great. But if you aren’t a spreadsheet aficionado or super meal planner, do your best. Be open. Be willing to accept help as it’s offered, when it arrives. If you’re doing this twin-raising business with a partner, he or she will likely be heavily involved. This can be a beautiful thing.

5 Parents of multiples are an amazing community. Other moms of twins and triplets are like the Navy Seals of parenting, and local twins/triplets clubs are an incredible resource for moral, emotional, and tactical support. You will be amazed to find there’s a ready-made club of women and men who utterly understand what you are going through. Even if you aren’t near a local twins’ club chapter, the resources online are fantastic. Welcome. Enjoy.

6 You are getting a head start on releasing the images of perfection in how you’ll parent. For mothers of twins, the opportunity to abandon certain parenting fantasies starts early. It’s okay not to be gloriously posing half nude with your baby bump on a magazine cover, or maintaining upper arm tone, or doing anything other than what’s necessary and comfortable. It’s okay if you are worrying over survival and finances rather than nursery themes and birth plans. All parents arrive at this moment of reality eventually. Parents of twins get there faster—and it opens the way to savor the good stuff, too.

7 You will sleep. Don’t listen to the scaremongers and naysayers. The first months will be intense, and sleep deprivation will be part of that. However, most twin parents get their children on a schedule and become organized about sleep. You may find yourself with glorious blocks of slumber, once the “survival phase” is over.

8 It’s fine to get fat. Your body is doing something extraordinary, and the social constraints on size and appearance simply don’t apply to you. A Navy Seal isn’t going to fret about his figure, and you don’t need to either. Be proud. You need to get through this mission, and that’s all that matters. See this article on weight gain for twin moms. <http://rscbayarea.com/blog/got-twins>

9 There’s no magic number. Building a family doesn’t unfold according to the ideals described by doctors, economists, bloggers, parents, neighbors or social scientists. There will always be those touting the idea that one child, two children, three children or no children is the new “ideal.” What’s optimum is what you happen to have. That’s the beginning and the essence of radical love.

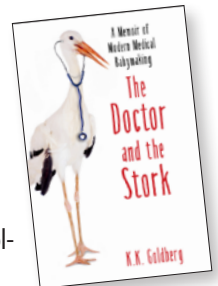
10 The twin bond is beautiful to behold. All the books tell you to emphasize the individuality of each of your twins. Don’t dress them the same! A shared birthday cake will scar them for life! Of course, your children will be individuals and should be treated as such. Far less is written about the beauty of togetherness that emerges between twins—the companionship and depth of friendship. Even with complexity and conflict inevitable, it’s dazzling to arrive in the world with a soul mate. Treasure this bond.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

MacDowell Fellow and MFA graduate K.K. Goldberg’s writing has appeared in The New York

Times and in numerous literary journals and anthologies, including The Sun, The Gettysburg Review, The Alaska Quarterly Review, The Chicago Quarterly Review and Best Women’s Travel Writing 2009. She’s also a regular contributor to The Huffington Post. A native of Bethesda, Maryland, Kathryn lives in Berkeley with her husband, twin toddlers, and a mischievous bichon. Connect with Kathryn at kkgoldberg.com, [Facebook.com/KathrynKefauver](https://www.facebook.com/KathrynKefauver), or [@kathrynkefaver](https://twitter.com/kathrynkefaver) on Twitter.

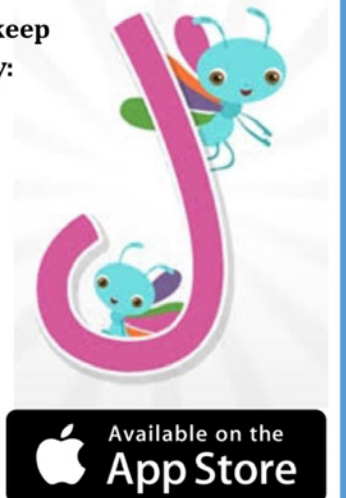


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When Colic Comes in Twos

SOME TIPS
TO HELP!

by David J. Lyons

Colic is any unexplained crying that lasts for long periods of time. There are probably several reasons for it, but until infants can talk, we adults will never know for certain what they are. One pretty good guess is that digestive organs are growing and being used at the same time. Whatever the cause, both of our twins had it.

As adults, we tend to only scream in extreme circumstances. For babies, screaming may be a sign of intense pain or it may signal mild discomfort or frustration. With our two colicky babies, neither of us slept for more than three hours at a stretch during those first four to five months. We didn't sleep through the night for almost a year. This, along with too much caffeine and failure to comfort our children pushed us to the limits of our sanity.

FINDING HELP

My feelings of frustration couldn't be ignored any longer. My wife also felt close to the end of her rope. We read from

standard guides for parents and found out we were not alone. We weren't to blame for our babies' suffering. This was an important lesson to learn and opened the door to understanding that the feelings of anger and hostility had more to do with our deteriorating physical and mental state than the actual crying.

Eventually, we began to accept the fact that our comforting methods might be repeatedly rejected. Still we kept trying. We learned to recognize when we needed to take breaks. In fact, having my wife do the same simple things that I tried and failed with often succeeded.

Understanding that this was not a sign that the baby preferred one parent to the other was the key in getting beyond the cycle of frustration. We came to the realization that understanding and patience with our children and each other was paramount.

MOVING ON

Like the memory of pain, the parental frustration of colic also fades after children outgrow this stage of development.

In fact, I had forgotten much of what we learned until the onset of our 2-year-olds' tantrums. As a result of our experience with colic, we realized that this, too, was only a stage.

However, instead of trying to soothe infants with immature digestive systems, we were trying to cope with 2-year-olds with developing personalities. But this time around we didn't have the added burden of working through our own feelings of denial.

When Kate toddles over to me screaming because I actually had the audacity to put another diaper on just after she pulled the previous one off, I pick her up gently and rub her back.

I tell her it's okay, and that she'll feel better soon. Even as her screaming intensifies and she buries her face in my neck, I have to smile. I know that this, too, shall pass. ♥

David J Lyons of Berkeley, California is a freelance writer and father of fraternal twins.

CALMING BABIES...AND PARENTS

The 'colic hold'—Hold the baby face down, supporting her with one arm between her legs. The other arm supports her head and chest. Clasp your hands under her tummy. This will form a cradle where the pressure of the babies' own weight puts gentle pressure on her abdominal area.

Back Rubs—Lie on your back with the baby on your stomach or chest. Rub the baby's back. Some nights this is the only way to get any sleep at all.

Pacing—the old standard of pacing the floor with your baby in your arms is not to be overlooked.

Music—Playing music or singing can also be very effective. Tony loved Brahms' Lullaby and so did I.

Change of scenery—A different part of the house or outside may break the cycle of crying and give some of your other remedies another chance to work.

Snooze Cruise—A drive is sometimes the only thing that puts an infant to sleep. More than one parent can be found on the roads and freeways in the middle of the night with a baby on board.

Swing—We found a battery-operated swing to be invaluable. It would usually quiet our infant and would put him or her to sleep. For tired parents with two or more unhappy babies, swings are great!

Combining Methods—On one particularly difficult afternoon, I finally stopped a very long bout of crying by singing to Tony while he was in the swing.

Because raising twins does not come with an instruction manual...



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As an experienced nanny to many families with multiples, mothers of twins ask me about ever three minutes, “I’m having troubles getting them to go to bed, what can I do?!”

STEP 1: RATIFYING A ROUTINE

“Mommy, I need another hug!”

“Daddy I’m thirsty!”

Does this sound like a familiar song in your household blaring in stereo? Eliminate bedtime battles with a clear-cut, consistent evening routine. I’ve found that a successful toddler’s bedtime routine starts at dinnertime and goes something like this:

- 5 PM dinner
- 6 PM bath or shower
- 6:30 PM story or age appropriate video
- 7 PM teeth brushing, with small cup of water (think smallest Dixie cup), and potty time.
- 7:15 PM promptly, into bed, ending the day with a bedtime prayer or discussion. In my case, it is more like a mental cry of “God, please, pretty please, help them fall asleep in three minutes tonight... I’ll do anything!”

As I kiss the angels goodnight, I remind them, “You may not get out of bed unless there is an emergency!” (...which I’ve clearly defined as a fire, a yell from mom, dad or me to get out of bed, or if they need to use the bathroom so badly that they’ll literally wet their pants!) “No exceptions!”

Michelle LaRowe is a “multiples nanny” who has lived and cared for (4) four families with twins. She is the author of two books including, *Nanny to the Rescue!*

Once you’ve established these bedtime boundaries, your battle is half won. Being consistent and following through with your established regimen will lead to a complete victory over bedtime battles once and for all.

STEP 2: SETTING THE SCENE

If you want your twins to form an association between their bedroom and their bedtime, reserve the bedroom for sleeping only. If their bedroom is their primary place of play, they will associate their room with activity and will expect to play whenever they enter.

To help your child form this association between her bedroom and bedtime, create a soothing environment, free from clutter. Keep toys and other distractions out of view; keep shades drawn and the room slightly cool at 68 degrees.

While it’s ideal to keep the twins’ bedroom fairly quiet, don’t keep the entire house quiet! The last thing you want is to have young twins who will only sleep when there’s complete silence (especially if you’re blessed enough to have a singleton or two in addition to your twins.) Be yourself. Resist the urge to tiptoe around the house while your toddler twins are sleeping (unless, of course, you’ve already figured out and have the luxury of following the golden rule: When they nap, you nap!)

Bedtime Battles



by Michelle LaRowe

Using white noise is great for talkative twins—it drowns out their combative moans and groans while providing soothing sounds that often lull children to sleep. As we all know once one twin falls asleep, the entertainment is gone and the other will join him in la-la land in no time.

STEP 3: TIME TO TRANSITION

The rule of thumb is this: When a child is 35 inches tall, or mobile and eager to climb, it’s time to transition to a “big kid’s bed.” There is no “right” age to transition, but for most kids it is between 1 and 3 years of age.

Regardless of the age you choose to make this transition, approach it with confidence and ease. Your twins will respond the same way. Have your twins participate in the transition by encouraging them to help pick out their new beds (if possible) or bed linens (a personalized pillowcase or one that allows a child to color a personal picture on it are great transitioning tools.) Choose a bed low to the ground and purchase a side guardrail or two for safety.

and the Path to Victory!



Put each toddler's new bed in exactly the same location as his crib used to be. Don't be surprised if your twins find it soothing to continue to sleep with their old crib blankets in their new "big kid beds". The old crib blankets may not cover the bed completely but they certainly fill children's hearts with security as your twins adjust to this new, roomier sleep space.

STEP 4: DEALING WITH DISASTER

However tempting it is to soothe your twins after they've hit the hay, if you're comfortable their physical needs have been met—they're fed, changed, clothed appropriately, and aren't sick or experiencing other unusual circumstances—the best thing you can do is let them learn to self-soothe. If your babies use pacifiers, be sure to put plenty in the crib—so you're not called to fetch those thrown overboard.

If crying turns to chaos, enter the room and make your presence known. Do not take either twin out of the crib. If you do, you'll be starting over from square one.

Believe it or not, a toddler won't climb out of his bed unless he thinks it's okay to do so. If your twins venture out of their beds, calmly but firmly get down to their level, look them squarely in the eyes and say, "Excuse me, we don't get out of bed during bedtime." You may be surprised with the "deer in the headlights" stares you will get as they turn around, one by one, and do the march of disappointment back to bed. If they don't go on their own, gently escort them back to their room, place them in their beds and say a quick goodnight.

If or when a struggle arises, don't argue, negotiate or bribe your twins. Your twins will amaze you with how quickly they live up to the expectations you set for them. If they know the rules, and you consistently follow through with enforcing them, your twins will learn you mean business. Your twins will soon wave their white flag in surrender.

During naptime, when it's generally more difficult for toddler twins to fall asleep, separate them by having one nap in the Pack 'N Play in a different room. This works well—it eliminates the "egging each other on" that occurs when one is more wide-awake than the other.

Having the back-up bed is a good idea to nip their nightlife in the bud. Most twins like to sleep together, and in my experience, a few days of solitude by separation does the trick. Even if they aren't old enough

to understand your language, chatty twins put in separate rooms won't be happy.

Their tears may be tormenting, but the lesson will be learned. When it's time for bed next, start them with a clean slate. Put them in the same room and again, if the activity continues for more than a few minutes, separate them. It takes only three or four times before they realize their behavior has a consequence. Your actions will convey the message: They can sleep together or apart, but sleep is non-negotiable.

Last but not least, if a monster resides in your twins' closet or under their beds, have your special monster spray handy. Custom-made for each child, wrap a lightly-fragranced aerosol air freshener in a brown paper bag, make a handmade label with the child's name and the purpose of her special spray—Susie's Monster Closet Cleaner. This will go a long way toward fending off any unwanted furry friends. One spritz before bedtime and that should be the end of it... until tomorrow night, of course. ♥



How Much Sleep do Your Twins Really Need?

by Christa D. Reed



Christa D. Reed has been the Editor-in-Chief of TWINS Magazine since 2007 and resides in Colorado with her husband and four boys, including fraternal twins.

Do you really know how much sleep your pre-school age twins need? There is a lot of talk lately about this very subject. Sleep. Something so wonderful but also it can be a challenging subject if you have a hard time trying to get your little ones to go to sleep. We as parents know that when they

do finally fall asleep after a long day it can sometimes feel like 'adult swim' at the public pool with calm, peaceful waters and no kiddos in sight! In reality however, most children (along with adults) are sleep-deprived and are putting themselves at increased risk for injury and poor school (and work) performance because of it. According to the National Sleep Foundation and American Academy of Pediatrics, children ages 3 to 5 years should be getting on average 11 to 13 hours of sleep! So if they have to get up at 7:00 AM that means your twins should be sleeping by 7:00 PM! Wait... stop the presses! You may be wondering, "This must be a joke, right?" Especially if you are in a household with two working parents with a hectic schedule or a single parent trying to juggle everything on your own. Oh and don't forget to throw in an extra singleton (or two) in the mix and add their activities... plus, making dinner, laundry, making sure homework is completed and any other additional tasks thrown in for good measure. They are supposed to be in bed and sleeping all by the magic hour of 7:00 PM? This schedule seems more like mission impossible for many parents in today's busy and hectic world. If preschoolers typically sleep 11-13 hours each night, then you can also count on the fact that most kids will stop napping after the age of four or five, too!

Another issue preschoolers experience and something pretty common at this age is difficulty falling asleep and wak-

ing up during the night. Also, due to an increased development of imagination, preschoolers will commonly experience nighttime fears and nightmares. They also tend to sleepwalk and sleep terrors peak during these preschool years. If your twins share a room and one is experiencing sleep disruptions, this may even create sleep problems for their co-twin as well.

Sleep Tips for Preschoolers

- Maintain a regular and consistent sleep schedule.
- Have a relaxing bedtime routine that ends in the room where the child sleeps.
- Child should sleep in the same sleeping environment every night, in a room that is cool, quiet and dark – and without a TV/I-PAD/Smartphone.

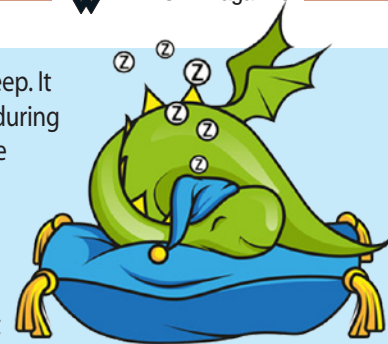
What should I do if my child says he or she is too scared to go to sleep?

Jodi Mindell at the National Sleep Foundation says:

- **Listen and understand.** Try to understand your child's fears. Don't dismiss or make fun of them.
- **Reassurance.** It is important to reassure your child if he is afraid. Communicate the idea of safety over and over again.
- **Teach coping skills.** Teach your child coping skills and discuss alternative ways to respond, such as "being brave" and thinking positive thoughts. You could talk about how you deal with something that you are afraid of. Also, provide examples of coping role models by reading stories about children who are afraid and conquer their fears.

- **Have fun in the dark.** Make being in the dark fun. Play flashlight tag. Have a treasure hunt and search for things that glow in the dark.
- **Use your imagination and be creative.** Use your imagination to fight imaginary fears, like monsters. Many families have found “monster spray” to be a wonderful way to help a child cope with bedtime fears. Some children are comforted by having a pet nearby for nighttime company (even a bedside fish tank may help). Whenever possible, have your child be actively involved in coming up with solutions to help him gain a sense of mastery and control.
- **Security object.** Help your child become attached to a security object that he can keep in bed with him. This can help your child feel more relaxed at bedtime and throughout the night.
- **Nightlight.** No matter what your child seems to be afraid of, a night-light can help. Nightlights are fine as long as it does not prevent your child from falling asleep. Another thing to try is leaving the bedroom door open so that your child doesn't feel isolated from the rest of the family.
- **Avoid scary television shows.** Keep your child away from scary TV shows, videos or stories that may add to his fears.
- **Relaxation training.** Teach your child relaxation strategies to help him relax at bedtime and fall asleep. For example, have your child imagine a relaxing scene, such as lying. ♥

Every living creature needs to sleep. It is the primary activity of the brain during early development. The sleep-wake cycle is regulated by light and dark and these rhythms take time to develop, resulting in the irregular sleep schedules of newborns. The rhythms begin to develop at about six weeks, and by three to six months most infants have a regular sleep-wake cycle. By the age of two, most children have spent more time asleep than awake and overall, a child will spend 40 percent of his or her childhood asleep. Sleep is especially important for children as it directly impacts mental and physical development.



THERE ARE TWO ALTERNATING TYPES OR STATES OF SLEEP:

Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM) or “quiet” sleep. During the deep states of NREM sleep, blood supply to the muscles is increased, energy is restored, tissue growth and repair occur, and important hormones are released for growth and development.

Rapid Eye Movement (REM) or “active” sleep. During REM sleep, our brains are active and dreaming occurs. Our bodies become immobile, breathing and heart rates are irregular.

**National Sleep Foundation*



GREAT BEDTIME BOOKS FOR KIDS

Turn the nighttime into your favorite time with these books that are sure to put a drowsy smile on your kids' faces.

Wrapping up the day by reading to your children near a reading light doesn't just create a comforting ritual, it also boosts their grasp of language, lowers their stress levels, improves their ability to learn, and gives them a positive memory of reading, which can turn them into readers when they get older. But what books are the best? These five titles—some classic, some newer—will settle your little ones down and get their eyelids drooping.

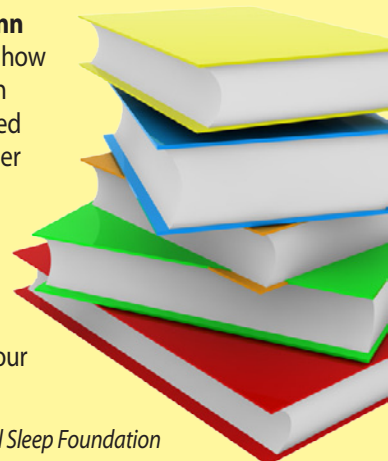
Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown: This book has been around for more than 60 years and has become the classic nighttime book. The premise is simple: Go around a room and say goodnight to everything you see—a picture, some socks, kittens, and, yes, the moon. The rhythm of the words will lull anyone to sleep.

I Love You, Stinky Face by Lisa McCourt: Do you think your children ask a lot of questions? They have nothing on the little boy in this story. It starts out with a mom putting her son to sleep, and turns into a series of increasingly silly questions about if his mom would still love him if he were transformed into things like a big scary ape or super stinky skunk. The answer, every time, is: of course she would.

How Do Dinosaurs Say Good Night? by Jane Yolen: Your child already knows how humans say goodnight, but what about a triceratops or a Tyrannosaurus rex? This funny read gives some important insight into the bedtime behaviors of these huge reptiles.

Russell the Sheep by Rob Scotton: This story follows a flock of sheep that turn in for the night. One of them, a very-awake Russell, just can't seem to fall asleep. He tries things like making it darker, cooling himself down, replacing his pillow, and more. At the end of the book, finally, he falls asleep—just as all the other sheep are waking up!

If Animals Kissed Good Night, by Ann Whitford Paul: One page describes how a giraffe mom and her baby kiss each other goodnight (with necks stretched way up towards the sky) while another how a mommy peacock and her baby do it (by spreading their tails wide and dancing around the room). Every species has its own secret way of kissing goodnight, and you can end the reading by giving your kid your own special kiss.



**National Sleep Foundation*

THE Myths of MOTHERHOOD



by Carol B. Cowley, M.S.N.



Like many new mothers of twins, I managed to get through that first year by sheer willpower putting one foot in front of the other, changing diaper after diaper, almost as if in a trance. However, by the time our twins were 15-months old, I was feeling increasingly overwhelmed and hopeless about my ability to continue juggling the many spheres of my life that felt so out of my control: two active toddlers, a demanding job, worries about day care and all those never-ending chores. I was afraid to slow down and ashamed to ask for help.

But continuing to live my life this way began to exact a toll on my physical and emotional health. I got pneumonia when the boys were 1-years-old, and I had a fever that continued for more than a year. Then I began to awaken at three o'clock every morning, unable to get back to sleep. When the alarm went off, I would lie in bed exhausted, feeling a sense of despair and dread, wondering how I could face another day.

That dark mood began to permeate every aspect of my life. At one point, I remember crying almost daily during my long commute to pick the boys up from day care. I waited, hoping to "snap out of it." Yet the sadness continued.

Finally, I summoned the courage to ask my doctor for a referral to a therapist. Asking for help and admitting that I suffered from depression represented a giant step for me. With the help of a gifted therapist and a course of antidepressant medication, I began the process of emerging from my depression. This involved making some logistical changes in our daily routine in order to reduce stress, as well as trying to understand and change the negative "self-talk" that fueled my depression.

Our boys are now almost 6 and life seems much easier than when they were babies. In retrospect, I can see that there were several core "myths" that contributed to my depression and robbed me of my ability to enjoy those early years with our new family. I share these core myths along with the realities, as I now see them, with the hope that other new mothers of multiples might read them and discover ways to be gentler on their own self.

MYTH #1

You should always feel lucky and blessed to be the mother of twins. Our culture still romanticizes motherhood, perpetuating the myth that being home with infants or young children is always joyful and easier than being out in the "real" world. Therefore, being home with two babies at once must be "twice the joy". How many times have strangers stopped you on the street and confessed "I've always wanted to have twins. I think it would be so much fun!" The message I got from society was that I should feel joyous, but in those initial months at home with our babies, I felt mainly exhausted and overwhelmed. I concluded, therefore, that I must be a bad (or at least, inadequate) mother. I could no longer see or appreciate the creative ways I was managing to love and care for two babies at once.

REALITY

You can love your twins unconditionally and feel blessed to have two beautiful babies. However, you do not always have to love trying to meet the physical and emotional needs of two babies simultaneously, nor always rejoice over the way your life has so drastically changed. Caring for two babies at once is one of the hardest things you may ever do in your life. And no one else, unless they have multiples of their own, can understand what it really feels like. Any reasonable person would at times feel exhausted, overwhelmed, and vulnerable to depression when faced with relentless stream of diapers, feedings and months of sleep deprivation. Expect to feel a wide spectrum of emotions once your twins arrive. You are not alone in your experience:

Studies have found significantly high rates of chronic exhaustion among mother of young twins (76% versus only 8% among mothers of singletons) and rates of depression ranging from 30% to 50% (three to five times the rates among mothers of singletons). We typically think of postpartum depression (PPD) as having its onset within three months of childbirth. However, experts on PPD now emphasize that women are at increased risk for depression for up to three years after giving birth.

MYTH #2

Taking time for yourself is selfish and means you're not taking care of your family. One of the most difficult things for mothers of multiples is to take time for ourselves. Especially when our babies are little, they have so many physical and emotional needs that require our attention. In my case, I had a supportive and involved husband who did his best to give me some breaks. However, the guilt and ambivalence that I experienced when I did take time away from our babies simply made the psychological costs of nurturing myself too high.

REALITY

"You cannot give from an empty cup." And you can't replenish your cup unless you take a break. Taking some time for yourself (to simply take a walk or have coffee with a friend) is important, not only for your well-being, but for your babies' as well. A recent study of mothers of very young twins found that mothers who asked for help and were less exhausted were much more sensitive and responsible to their babies' individual needs. Of course, the reality is that any dedicated "Mommy Time" is extremely limited and therefore, precious. Protect it fiercely and spend it only on activities that you truly enjoy or with people who delight and nurture you.

MYTH #3

Each individual decision I make about how I raise my twins is critically important to their future well-being. Making the wrong decision could be devastating. As mothers, we are faced with a never-ending stream of choices regarding the care of our children:

Breastfeed or bottle feed? Return to work or stay home? The list seems endless. Unless we are careful, we can begin to expend too much energy worrying about making the "right decision," losing sight of the bigger picture with respect to the good jobs we do as mothers.

REALITY

The decisions you make about caring for your twins deserve careful consideration. But it is the sum of all your decisions and the daily interactions with your children that matter the most. Trust yourself. No one knows your twins better than you do. If it turns out that a decision was not the best one in the long run, you will know that and will have even more information under your belt to draw upon the next time you're faced with a difficult decision.

I know now that the love I have for my twins is like an iceberg. The tiny, exposed tip of the iceberg represents the day-to-day decisions: one crib or two, same classroom or separate? But those decisions are supported by the unseen, massive body of the iceberg, comprised of all the loving interactions, attention, and care I have given our boys. I know that it is the powerful base of the iceberg that shapes and nurtures them in the long run.

Raising twins is a unique challenge and it is hard work. Don't make your job even harder by letting these or other myths about motherhood rob you of your ability to see just how creative and capable you are. While some days will feel harder than others, there should also be some days when you can find ways to nurture yourself and take pleasure in the things you do. If these good days begin to disappear, especially if you notice other symptoms of clinical depression such as difficulty sleeping or eating, feel sad, worthless, or hopeless about the future, don't hesitate to seek professional help. Asking for support during times of stress is not a sign of weakness, but rather a testament to how much you value and treasure your children, your family and yourself. ❤️

Carol B. Cowley, M.S.N. is from Boulder, Colorado and is an OB/GYN nurse practitioner and the mother of identical twin boys.





by Meredith Bland

DOWN

With a sickness

7am: Oh God. Oh no. Am I.....I am. I'm sick. I'm sick on a Tuesday with 3-year-old twins. Oh no, WHY? Dear lord, why hast thou set before me this day of pain and grief? Are my days not hard enough when I'm healthy?! Giving me an illness when I have to parent is like punching an airline pilot in the face before take-off – it just puts everyone in danger.

7:10: Still in bed. I cannot possibly take care of the kids today. Maybe my husband will stay home with them? Or he could drop them off at a petting zoo or toy store? Anything that will occupy them for the next 6-8 hours.

7:30: My uncaring, unfeeling husband has left for work. Now it's just the four of us: me, the twins, and an illness I will call Maleficent. Maleficent wants me silent and horizontal. And she wants it bad.

7:35: The kids need breakfast. From the floor, I point at the refrigerator and say, "Waffle.....toast.....apple.....mmpf....." They grab themselves whatever and I crawl over to the television and turn on Nick Jr. for some sweet, sweet relief.

8:00-9:00: Agony. I am in agony IN hell. Another episode of Yo Gabba Gabba? Sure. Why not. It's not like I have any shame left today, as I lay here in my pajamas, drooling on the couch at 9:00 in the morning.

9:00-10:00: The kids.....where are the kids. Oh wait, I hear them running up the stairs to get themselves snacks (probably big handfuls of jelly beans and methamphetamines). They're very supportive, though. They keep pressing their faces up to mine and singing "Keep trying, keep trying, don't give up, never give up".

10:30: Ok. I am not going to look at the clock for a while. Then when I look at it again, it will be time to make them lunch. Which means it will almost be time for them to nap. Ok. I can do this.

10:45: DANGIT!

11:30: Lunchtime. Look, Mommy is going to crawl up the stairs. Yeah, like a dog. Isn't that hilarious? Come on group, let's go teamwork our way into making a sandwich.

12:00: One hour till nap time. You want me to be the princess and you are the evil Queen? Perfect. Let's play Snow White. "Oh

no, I am going to eat this poison apple and fall asleep.....oh.....no.....zzzzzzzzzzzz." Now go figure out how to wake me up. But don't touch me or talk to me. That is part of the game.

1:00: NAP TIME!! HALLEJULAH!! What's that, children? What do you mean, you don't WANT to take a nap? Guess what, buddies? I don't WANT to be sick, but I guess today is the day all of our dreams die. Now get in there so I can pat you on the head and screech out a lullaby.

1:10: Mommy out.

2:05: Aaaaaand, we're up. I send my husband an e-mail letting him know I have not "rallied" but am still feeling super bad. He replies, with a cheery, "only a few more hours!" Lucky for him, I am too weak right now to arrange for his death.

3:30-5:30: This is bad, folks. Really bad. I should not have taken Nyquil at nap time, because now I am sick AND loopy. It's like when you're driving down the freeway and all of a sudden you realize you've missed your exit, but you don't remember seeing it go by? Yeah. Like that, only one minute you are wiping a child's butt, and the next minute the butt and the child are gone and you are sitting on a cold bathroom floor with your head against the sink. "What the – ? Aw heck. Now I have to double back and find that butt."

5:30: Kids stop fighting. Kids stop fighting. Kids stop fighting. Kids stop fighting. Kids stop fighting. Kids stop fighting. Wait. Am I saying this out loud? No. "Kids stop fighting." There. Better.

5:45: Oh man. I see headlights. In our driveway. Hail, the conquering hero!! He has returned home! Here are your children. Enjoy them. I am going to turn on the bathroom fan to drown out any cries for help, getting into bed, and gracefully passing out. If I'm not better tomorrow, I will just take the kids to the library, sit on a bean bag, and cry hot, salty tears. For now, I bid you adieu. ♥

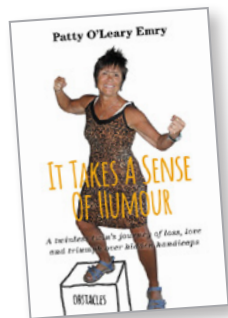
Meredith Bland is a freelance writer who blogs at *Pile of Babies: Take a Knee, I Have Nonsense to Spew* (<http://www.pileofbabies.com>). *Pile of Babies* is a finalist for *Parent Map Magazine's* 2012 Golden Teddy Award for Best Mom Blog.

Finding My Twin

EXCERPTS FROM
**"IT TAKES A SENSE OF
HUMOUR—A TWINLESS
TWIN'S JOURNEY
OF LOSS, LOVE AND
TRIUMPH OVER HIDDEN
HANDICAPS!"**



by Patty Emry



This is one of my many short stories taken from the newly released "It Takes a Sense of Humour – A twinless twin's journey of loss, love and triumph over hidden handicaps." This is a Journey about one twin looking for the other!

The doctor's came to explain to my parents Baby A had severe unique birth defects. They said I would most certainly die and did my parents want to hold me, to say goodbye. The doctors wanted to take me from my parents, and

put me aside. My twin, Cathy, was in an incubator upstairs in the lowan hospital.

Mom and Dad did hold me and put my life into God's hands as they said Hail Mary's and asked for a miracle. Handing me back, Mom and Dad pleaded with the doctors to do anything, something! Later my parents said sadly, "That was the most difficult thing they ever had to do".

Courageous ground breaking surgery completed, I was almost cut in half. Yet, the doctors doubted my survival and said so. But, of course I did. Throughout my life, I would require 21 more surgeries, and I would need to endure time-consuming daily medical procedures for life.

When strong enough, my parents brought us home. Our family had some good and very busy days. This didn't last long, when three months later as mom describes it: "The week from hell" consumed our family.

The week included: my father's transfer to Atlanta Georgia, Mom bought the train tickets; mom took Cathy to her doctor with cold-like symptoms. The next day Mom heard Cathy's gurgling noises and called the ambulance. On route to the hospital and while holding her baby, she heard nothing. My twin had passed. My dear Mom says, "A silence I have never heard," Cathy was gone and

I would for life be treated as a singleton. A day after the funeral we moved south. My Mom still had a train ticket for my twin.

As a young child I would feel something was missing: and I noticed an emptiness that would stay with me my whole life. I was curious about twins and later angry or jealous when I would see them. As a teenager, I told people I was a twin, and any details I knew. Many would question me, and sometimes would not believe me. I wanted a sister, and a best friend. I would stare in the mirror, pretending there were two of us looking at each other. I was confused.

My parents had an article from the paper which announced our birth announcements.

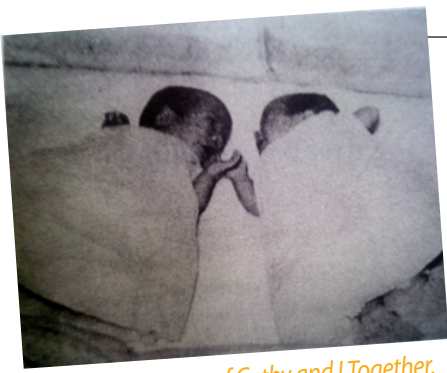
Is it possible to miss someone I never had conversed with? As twins in the womb we must have had some communication through touch. Only about eight years later did my Mother show me the only photo of us—two three month old twins side by side looking at each other, holding hands.

Very few understand the twin relationship, and even fewer understand the loss of the twin bond. As I grew older, I felt depressed, along with the tremendous why-did-I survive guilt.

Years later my husband took me to the U.S. on a business trip with him—to visit my twin. I wanted to find some answers to finally see some proof. Am I really a twin?

As we arrived in Iowa, I felt nervous and excited. It was a beautiful day; maybe my twin Cathy created the warm welcome. We stopped for directions and to phone my parents. They reminded me to find the area's only Catholic cemetery.

After driving across a huge bridge, we arrived to a cemetery, but staff was not available to help. We searched the area for three hours. Frustrated we did notice, at least, she is nearby where deer and rabbits were frolicking around. But, it was getting dark. Needless to say, I was extremely upset, and I still had to phone my anxious parents back in Vancouver, only to hear their disappoint-



The Only Picture of Cathy and I Together.

through hell back then.

I was quiet, in shock; we had traveled so far to connect with my twin who was so very close...and yet my dream seemed hopeless. As usual I stayed in the car at hotel check in. Still stunned, I was glancing around and noticed license plates that were not Iowa. All of the cars everywhere were from Illinois!

I ran into the hotel yelling out, "Is this Illinois?" The clerk looked at me as a crazy person, and so did my husband as I started laughing. My husband also asked, "What state were we in?" We were in the wrong state for Cathy. We had driven across the Mississippi River into Illinois, wow, seriously!

My husband however had meetings planned for the next week and so we could not return for our search. The next morning, my twin decided to intervene. The truck engine would not start. The repairs would take another day. We had to stay waiting for the parts. This was definitely twin sister trickery.

Afterwards we looked up my Dad's cousin who lived in the area. When she answered the phone she started to yell in disbelief, "It's the twin, she's alive!"

What did she mean I am alive; of course, I am. Her reaction reminded me that when we left Iowa doctors had warned everyone I would probably not survive. Communication with distant family was not great back then. However, this was a huge gift: someone knew my twin.

The next morning heart pounding, we walked through the old cemetery gates. After searching through old records, the attendant told us the children's grave site was literally outside the door on our left. There on the ground was a small, loose football-size stone which simply read: Catherine O'Leary Nov. 2, 1950 – Jan. 23 1951.

When I saw this, I yelled, "She has my birth date too!" I repeated this three times. "Look she is an O'Leary!" I could hardly breathe, crying for thirty minutes or more. Reality hit me hard! I was glad my husband listened to my plea for privacy. Here we are alone, The O'Leary twins together at last, in spirit. I really was a twin. We would have been a force to reckon with!

I placed a new little ceramic guardian angel next to her. I told her, "Cathy, I will continue to live a fulfilling life in your honor," I added, "OK, but I won't see you in heaven for a while: I have a lot of living to do." I know she responded in true O'Leary humor, "You better!"

ment. On our way to the hotel, we were amazed at the beautiful scenery and interesting architecture of the area. My parent's memories were of a dreary house, cold winters and bad heating, as my family had gone

My loving husband reminded me it was time to leave. I kept saying to him, "I can't leave her I can't, not again!" I said good bye and walked up towards the car. I glanced back over my shoulder and I saw what an amazing woman she would have been.

Driving out of Davenport a storm hit, so Greg was forced to pull off the road. Sitting in silence I wondered – Is she ticked off we are leaving? But, I said with a chuckle, "Honey, I think Cathy is saying in a loud way, "Thanks for coming, I too needed to see you." ♥

Patty O'Leary Emry is a retired Physical Education teacher/Athletics coach, mother of three and wife of 44 years. Currently she is co-host of a wellness radio show; owner and consultant of "Balance Forward" life marathon and weight loss management; inspirational speaker "Myth Buster" and author.

You can purchase a copy of "It Takes a Sense of Humour—a twinless twin's journey of loss, love and triumph over hidden handicaps!" from Amazon: http://www.amazon.com/Takes-Sense-Humour-twinless-handicaps-ebook/dp/B000TYND70/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1443190178&sr=8-1&keywords=It+Takes+a+Sense+of+Humour+a+twinless+twins+journey

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The Vaccination Debate

by Shandra Locken

A widely debated topic in parenting circles, online, the workplace and just about everywhere else is whether or not we should immunize our children. **Before I get into this, I want to be clear that I am pro-vaccination.** I will try to be as non-biased as possible and present the facts, but that is my disclaimer.

As of January 2015, the CDC recommends that children get immunized for **14 different diseases** including Hepatitis B, Diphtheria, Polio, Pertussis and Chicken Pox. These vaccines are administered in sometimes several doses, from birth to age 18. Yes, it is hard to see your baby get stuck with a needle time and again, but in doing so you are protecting him or her against debilitating or even fatal diseases. Babies and children under 5 are especially susceptible to disease because of their underdeveloped immune systems. They do inherit their birth mother's immunity but only for the first few months or even weeks after birth. That being said, babies who are fed breast milk get a longer ride because of the antibodies contained in breast milk.

One of the questions many parents ask is, "What are vaccines made of?" Vaccines contain a few primary ingredients. One is of course, the disease itself. WHAT? Yes, a vaccine will have either killed or weakened germs, called antigens. These antigens trick the body into thinking it has been infected and in turn, the body's immune system creates antibodies. These antibodies are what cause the body to become immune to future infections. Otherwise, the body would have to actually BE infected in order to gain that immunity and that's what we want to avoid. **Other ingredients** include a suspending fluid such as saline or sterile water, aluminum to help the vaccine stimulate an immune response, antibiotics to prevent the germ from multiplying, or Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) to

help stabilize the vaccine. Incidentally, MSG is a major ingredient of Hidden Valley Ranch dip, in case anyone asks. One big complaint about vaccines is that they contain mercury laced Thimerosal. Number one, the only vaccine that contains Thimerosal is the inactivated influenza vaccine. Secondly, we are exposed to mercury in small amounts every time we eat fish, handle button cell batteries or run our tongues across that circa 1985 tooth filling.



Most of the time vaccines work. If you consider the fact that the last confirmed case of naturally occurring Polio in the US was in 1979, I would say they work pretty darn well. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the average number of reported cases was 35,000. That's three zeros my friends. By 1957, that number had shrunk to 2,500, after the 1955 introduction of the first Polio vaccine. The big one in recent months that has people talking is measles and according to the CDC is the most deadly for children. It is estimated that **90% of susceptible people** who come into contact with an infected person WILL contract the disease. One out of every 20 children who contract measles will get pneumonia, which is the most common cause of measles related death. Other complications include hearing loss from ear infection, encephalitis (swelling of the brain) and diarrhea. In 2000, measles had been all but eliminated in the United States...until people started listening to a certain blonde who shall remain nameless. And just in case there is ONE person who still doesn't know, Dr. Andrew Wakefield's famous study that linked Autism and the MMR vaccine was debunked in 2010 and Dr. Wakefield was stripped of his medical license. No other researcher has been able to reproduce those findings since.

You may be saying to yourself, "Okay so if I don't vaccinate, isn't my child protected by herd immunity?" **Herd immunity** is described by the CDC as, "...a situation in which, through vaccination or prior illness, a sufficient proportion of a population is immune to an infectious disease, making its spread from person to person unlikely. Even individuals not vaccinated (such as newborns and those with chronic illnesses) are typically protected because the disease has little opportunity to spread within their community." Many people who refuse to vaccinate are relying on herd immunity to keep their children safe. As we are seeing with the measles, this only lasts as long as the "herd" is healthy. The more people who refuse to vaccinate, the less of the herd is immune, and the weak (too young or too ill to vaccinate) will suffer. Fair warning - getting on my soapbox now. The herd immunity excuse should be reserved for those who cannot vaccinate due to cancer or a life-threatening allergy to a vaccine component. Perfectly healthy children should be vaccinated and should not be getting a free ride from those of us who did our moral and civic duty. Please vaccinate your children. That's all. ♥

Shandra Locken is a member of Paradise Valley Mothers of Multiples and serves on the board as the Blog editor.

<http://www.pvmom.org/blog/the-vaccination-debate>

by Christa D. Reed

A Formula for Success

Twins Hunter and Kruin Olsen-Hodges Take On Formula One Racing

Meet Hunter and Kruin Olsen-Hodges, identical twin racing drivers on the brink of something great.

But five years ago, it was just a dream.

Their journey started in their home state of Wisconsin back in the spring of 2011. They had been big fans of Formula One and other types of car racing, and dreamed of getting into car racing for many years. They knew that most race car drivers got their start in go-karting, so following suit, they decided to do the same. They got a couple of used karts and jumped right into their first race without really knowing what they were doing. However, they persevered, and after months of practice and reading up, it paid off because by the end of that year, they were in contention at the top of their class. Leading into 2012, both of them were a fighting force, winning seven races, including a championship.

Although it sounds easy and lots of fun, karting is actually a very technical and challenging sport mentally, physically and even emotionally. You need to not only be knowledgeable about setups and mechanics, but you also have to be very physically and emotionally fit, too!

In 2013 they made a big decision to move halfway across the country from their home in Wisconsin down to Florida while also making a big move up to a newer and faster class of kart racing. They traded in their used chassis with rebuilt Yamaha engines, for new chassis and "TaG" engines that were twice as fast, which was something they needed to do in order to compete since Florida had some of the best competition in the sport. When they began racing down in Florida in only seven competitions, they were consistently at the top, which was pretty good considering that most of the other racers had much more experience, funding and support behind them than they did.

Last year, the twins put racing aside for a while and they both attended college, both receiving high marks and even received a few academic awards, but it wasn't what they truly wanted to do. So in early 2015, they got back into the driver's seat and immediately garnered great results, both getting onto the podium two times each.



Recently they have experienced some big changes. First, they started working with a professional sponsorship coach to help them attract sponsors (sponsors are something that all serious racers need in order to afford this expensive sport!) With that

collaboration they have been able to create and launch a new racing team website: www.twinforceracing.com and they are also in the process of launching a related informational website: www.startkartingnow.com, which will be geared toward helping newbies get started in karting.

Another major change for these racing twins was, after their dad lost his job in Florida and was starting a new business

where he could live anywhere, their entire family made the decision to move to a city that would help elevate their racing careers and enable them to create the next chapter in their story...So they packed up and headed north to Indianapolis, Indiana---the racing capital of the world! This will give them a chance to really get involved in the sport and learn from the best of the best in the industry.

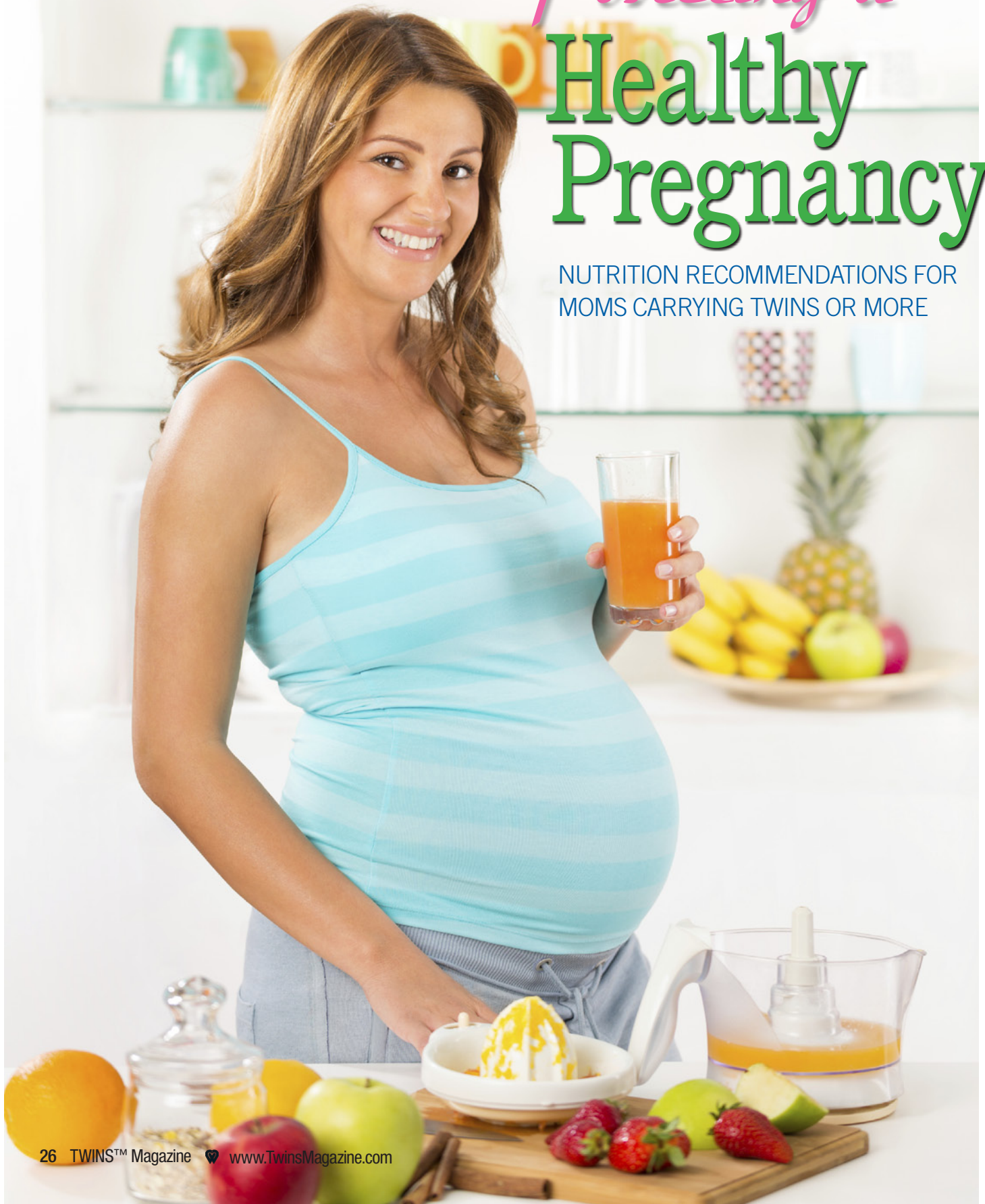
One fun highlight for these guys happened this summer when they attended for the very first time the 40th Annual Twins Days Festival in Twinsburg, Ohio. Over the course of the weekend, they participated in several research studies and also learned more about Twin-to-Twin-Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS) courtesy of the Twin-to-Twin-Transfusion Foundation (www.ttts.org). Their mom actually was diagnosed with TTTS in utero when she was carrying them, so it was a very personal cause and important for them to learn more about it. They then decided to donate all the money they had made from participating in the research studies that weekend to the TTTS Foundation.

Also, while at the Twins Days Festival, on a whim they entered the Twins Talent Show on Sunday. For their "act" they got up on stage and told their racing story... how they got into racing and where they envision their careers to go moving forward. No doubt their plan is to get to Indianapolis and start taking the racing world by storm and with their drive and determination it surely is a "formula" for success. Look out Indy, here they come! ♥

by Betsy McLinda

Fostering a Healthy Pregnancy

NUTRITION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
MOMS CARRYING TWINS OR MORE



Tamara Eberlein, of Ridgefield, Connecticut, though she was doing everything possible to ensure a healthy pregnancy with twins. However, through no fault of her own, Tamara did not have a healthy pregnancy and ended up delivering her boy/girl twins nine weeks premature.

"When we discovered I was expecting twins, I asked my OB/GYN about additional nutrition guidelines. He told me all I needed to do was gain an extra five (5) pounds," Tamara, co-author of the book: *When you're Expecting Twins, Triplets or Quads* remembers... "That wasn't enough."

Tamara said she wanted to write the book that she wished had been available when she was pregnant. So when Barbara Luke, Sc.D., M/P.H., R.D., offered her the opportunity to co-author a book about pregnancy with multiples, she jumped at the chance. Dr. Luke directed the University of Michigan Multiples Clinic.

"I do a lot of patient education," Dr. Luke says. "I teach them about their bodies, nutrition, and signs and symptoms of early labor." These visits are in addition to regular appointments with the women's OB/GYN... her work over the past few years, Dr. Luke has seen a dramatic improvement in the birth weights of babies of patients.

"On average, we can improve birth weight 18% to 20% for twins and 35% for triplets," says Dr. Luke, who sees between 45 and 50 patients a year. "In our program, 70% of our twin moms deliver after 36 weeks, compared to 40% of mothers who don't come to this clinic."

Helen Armer of Ann Arbor, Michigan, was a patient of Dr. Luke's when she was pregnant with triplets. At birth, her triplets were 4 pounds, 11 ounces; 4 pounds 12 ounces; and 5 pounds, 13 ounces. "All multiple births are high risk," Helen says, "You should seek out a specialist as soon as you know you have a multiple birth pregnancy."

EARLY EFFORTS PAY OFF

The patter of weight gain during pregnancy is more important than the total amount of weight gain. The average size woman pregnant with multiples should gain:

Twins—24 pounds by 24 weeks; 40-50 pounds total

Triplets—36 pounds by 24 weeks; 50-60 pounds total

Quadruplets—50 pounds by 24 weeks; 65-80 pounds total

"We don't think of the special nutritional demands for a multiple pregnancy as a burden. Instead, we see them as a means of empowerment," Dr. Luke says.

Stacy Moore of Plymouth, Michigan, went through the program. She says, "The program gave me an element of control over my pregnancy and increased my confidence to carry my twins to term." Her twins, Steven and Brandon, were born at 38 weeks weighing 6 pounds, 11 ounces and 6 pounds, 1 ounce respectfully.

Dr. Luke divides pregnancy into three time periods that differ from trimesters. Weight gain before 20 weeks dramatically affects fetal growth in the middle and late periods. Weight gain during 20

to 28 weeks immediately affects the growth of the fetuses, whereas weight gain from 28 to 36 weeks does not affect the weight of the fetuses as much as the first and second periods.

"Your pregnancy weight is a vital consideration as well." Dr. Luke says. "If you are underweight when you conceive, you should aim to gain the additional amount of weight it would take to bring you to the normal body weight for your height and build. If you are overweight at conception time, you still must gain a reasonable amount of weight from eating the right foods. This is usually about 10 pounds less than our normal recommendations."

"I was underweight when I became pregnant with twins," says Ann Arbor native, Judy Levy, mother of fraternal twin girls who were 6 pounds, 4 ounces and 7 pounds at birth. "Dr. Luke wanted me to gain 40 pounds by 24 weeks, and I did it with her help. She gave me concrete examples of foods to cure my nausea so I could eat what was recommended in the program."

The "salty-and-sweet" approach is among the newest treatments for morning sickness. Judy would eat some potato chips and a glass of lemonade when she felt nauseous. Soon she would feel well enough to eat foods prescribed in the program's diet.

FOOD POWER IS IMPORTANT

Dr. Luke's nutritional guidelines recommend that 40% of a woman's daily diet while pregnant with multiples come from carbohydrates (breads, cereals, pasta, dairy and fruit); 40% from fat (dairy, nuts and oils); and 20% from protein (meat, seafood, poultry and dairy).

"It's a very balanced diet," Dr. Luke says. "But, my emphasis is on animal protein from meat. It takes protein to build protein."

The recommended daily calories are 3,500 for women carrying twins; 4,000 for triplets and 4,500 for quad mothers. This may seem impossible at first, but can easily be divided into three main meals and four hearty snacks. Examples of good snacks are a bowl of cereal with whole milk and a piece of fruit, or a whole tuna fish sandwich.

Serving sizes are also important. For example, a mother expecting quads is advised to eat 12 1-ounce servings of animal protein a day. This does not mean 12 steaks. It could mean 12 ounces of steak or an 8-ounce steak and a 4-egg omelet. Pregnant women can also get a big boost with nutritional shakes and supplements.

Another important part of the diet is water intake. Women pregnant with multiples are advised to drink at least eight 16-ounce glasses of water each day. A good way to monitor your water intake is to fill four 32-ounce jugs of water each night for the following day. Drinking enough water could help prevent preterm labor since dehydration is often a factor in early labor. "Anytime I slacked off on my water intake, I got dehydrated and started having contractions--sometimes as many as 12 an hour," says Anne Seifert of Jerome, Michigan, mother of healthy quadruplets.

PROMOTING POSITIVE PREGNANCY OUTCOMES

Dr. Luke sets a multiple's target birth weight at about the 50th percentile of the singleton birth weight, which is about 6 pounds, 3 ounces for the 36th week of gestation. "If the birth weight of your children is as close to their genetic potential as possible, it has a huge ripple effect toward starting their childhood as healthy individuals," she says.

Tamara agrees. "You can make a difference in the outcome of your pregnancy," she says. "It's not your fault if something goes wrong, but there's a lot you can do to stack the odds in your favor." ♥

Betsy McLinda is an identical twin and resident of Wheat Ridge, Colorado

FINDING HELP

Women pregnant with multiples may want to seek the care of a registered dietitian. Most insurance carriers will pay for this when the patient is referred by her OB/GYN. To find a nutrition specialist, visit the American Dietetic Association's website at www.eatright.org or call toll-free (800) 366-1655



MENU GUIDELINES FOR MOTHERS OF MULTIPLES

*Source: When you're Expecting Twins, Triplets or Quads by Dr. Barbara Luke and Tamara Eberlein

	Non-pregnant	Singleton		Twin		Triplet	
		Pregnancy	Nursing	Pregnancy	Nursing	Pregnancy	Nursing
Calories	2,200	2,500	2,700	3,500	3,200	4,000	3,700
Protein (grams) 20% of calories	110	126	135	176	160	200	185
Carbohydrates (grams) 40% of calories	220	248	270	350	320	400	370
Fat (grams) 40% of calories	98	112	120	155	142	178	164

	Non-pregnant	Singleton		Twin		Triplet	
		Pregnancy	Nursing	Pregnancy	Nursing	Pregnancy	Nursing
Dairy							
8oz (1 cup) milk; or 8 oz (1 cup) ice cream; 8 oz (1 cup) cottage cheese; 1 oz (slice) hard cheese	4	6	8	8	10	10	12
Meat , fish, poultry 1 oz	6	6	6	10	6	10	7
Eggs , 1 fresh	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Vegetables ½ cup cooked or 1 cup fresh	4	4	4	4	4	5	5
Fruits ½ cup or 1 fresh piece	4	4	4	7	5	8	5
Breads and Grains 1 oz; ¾ cup cooked	8	8	8	10	10	12	12
Fats, oils and nuts 1 tbsp oil; 1 pat butter; 1 oz nuts	4	5	5	6	5	7	5

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FIVE OREOS NO MORE



Kelly Sargent resides in Williston, Vermont as an artist and writer of children's stories. She adores her twin sister, as well as her exceptionally talented two children. This is her second contribution to TWINS magazine.

by Kelly Sargent

When I entered the world, a reflection accompanied me. My twin sister, Renee, acted as a living mirror to me. As I grew into childhood, she looked like me in every way, right down to the same goofy grin. She pulled to the left when she walked, like me. She tossed her hair over her right shoulder, like me. She absent-mindedly brushed bangs over her eyebrows, like me. But it would be years before I realized this "mirror" had not only been a fun novelty, but had also served as a means to see, shape, define, and, ultimately, know myself.



For many years, I thought that just because Renee and I were physically identical, it meant that we also had to behave identically. If one of us had an interest, the other had to hold the same curiosity. Renee liked to play basketball; so, I had to practice my dribbling. My twin cried when our mother scolded her for spilling grape juice on the carpet; so, it was my twinly duty to shed tears. When she wanted five Oreo cookies because "5" was her favorite number, I was compelled to ask for five Oreos as well.

Any differences between us, our parents imposed. To tell us apart, from day one, Renee wore red or pink, while I wore blue or yellow. Clothing, shoes, and birthday cakes were all identical in pattern and style, except for their colors. We grew up with identical pink and yellow bassinets, red and blue flowered sundresses, and pink and blue striped birthday candles. Each one's colors were banned from the other too. When I wanted a cherry sucker at the candy store, my sister snatched it from my hand and replaced it with a lemon one, insisting, "Red is my color."

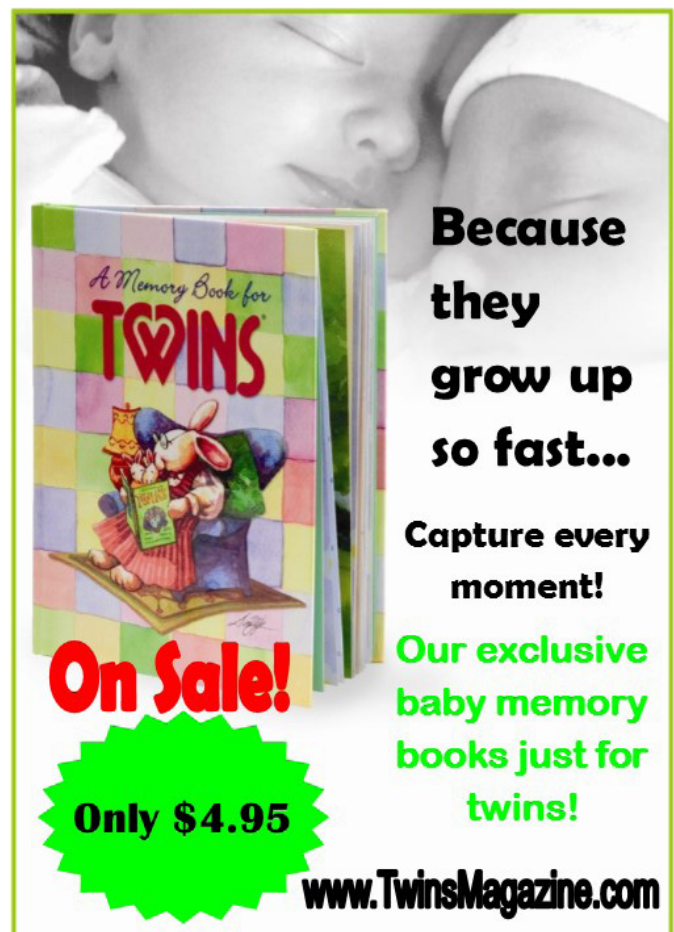
Somewhere in my teen hood, though, I realized that I hated basketball, my favorite number was 3, and I didn't even like Oreos. And I knew these things because of – perhaps even in spite of – my twin. The day came during middle school when we needed to define ourselves as separate from each other. Sure, identical twins we were; yet, identical people we needn't be. My sister joined the basketball team, and I joined the Drama club. She started jogging on weekends, while I spent my time reading teen novels. We learned to define ourselves by drawing lines between ourselves. Sports became her domain, and academics became mine. I secretly desired playing field hockey, but didn't pursue it because sports – all sports – were reserved for her. I found out years later that in high school, Renee had had the opportunity to play the leading role in a school play, but she didn't undertake it for the same reason.

By high school, family and relatives, as well as friends, had come to deem us as either the "strong twin" or the "smart twin." Renee and I compared ourselves mercilessly, deepening the imposed line between us. We gradually accepted that I also held the exclusive claim to "niceness," while she solely possessed the trait of "assertiveness." Renee grew to become more outspoken, as I developed a more unassuming and gentle demeanor. We succeeded in coming to "know" ourselves by comparison and contrast to each other; but, we had done so to such an extreme that Renee didn't know that she was still smart, and I didn't realize that I was also strong. I carried into adulthood this illusion of myself, and tried to reinforce it through choices I made. I played the "nice girl" early in a romantic relationship where, for many years, I tolerated behavior that was unkind. When my anger did flash, I told myself, "This isn't you. Be nice."

It got old, though.

I began to question what I thought I knew; I began to question who I am. My journey led me to a realization that being nice didn't mean that I couldn't be assertive; being kind didn't mean that I couldn't be outspoken about mistreatment. I had known my twin to be the one who was strong and in charge in our relationship, but that didn't mean that I wasn't also strong and couldn't be in charge of my own destiny. I began to know myself deeper as I contrasted myself against my significant other. I came to realize that my beliefs differed from his on multiple levels. In examining my differences in expectations and personal values from those of his, I learned more about who I really am. I could not have further defined myself if I had not had him against whom to contrast myself. This process of compare-and-contrast that my twin and I had developed during our teenhood, later served in adulthood to open a window through which I was able to see the real me; and this gift, I credit to my twinhood. Throughout the process of separation and living on my own, I have discovered that I am nice and strong. I enjoy academia and physical activity. I'm awesome at reciting poetry and practicing yoga.

What I know today is that I play tennis well, eat chocolate chip cookies with gusto, and don't have a blue piece of clothing hanging in my closet. Renee and I have plans to hike this weekend and take in a play. This is a fine place to be. ♥



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3

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4

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Age 6
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5

Avery & Maxwell, FR
Age 2.5
Aurora, IL



6

Jennifer & Juliana, FR
Age 5-months
Okotoks, Alberta, Canada



7

Sebastian & Salvatore, ID
Age 2
Longmeadow MA



8

Marek & Karolina, FR
Age 13-months
Comstock Park, MI



September/October 2015



10

Kristina & Soledad, ID
Age 6
Lockhart, TX

11

Zoey & Jack, FR
Age 8-months
Bottineau, ND

9

Hudson & Gavin, FR
Age 3
Cincinnati, OH

12

Lily & Ivym, ID
Age 14-months
Springfield, IL

13

Austin & Tyler, FR
Age 1 (in photo)
Somerset TX



14

Wesley & Kailey, FR
Age 1
St Louis MO

15

Reagan & Riley, FR
Age 8
Bamberg, SC

16

Gavin & Grant, ID
Age 20-months
Hamilton, NJ



17

Mavis & Maverick, FR
Age 2-months (in photo)
Cedar Hill, TX

18

Caroline & Allison, ID
Age 1 (in photo)
Easton, CT

19

Lincoln & Landon, FR
Age 2
Mazomanie WI

Double Takes



Jordyn & Jaedyn, FR
Age 6
Memphis, TN

20



Annika & Isabella, FR
Age 10
Bloomington, IL

21



Morgan & Mackenzie, ID
Age 11
Stillwater, NY

24



Isley & Zilare, ID
Age 8
Portland, OR

22



Raylan & Rylie, FR
Age 4-months
Houston, TX

23



Andrew & Alex, FR
Age 11-months in photo
Spokane, WA

25



Harrison & Josephine, FR
Age 2 1/2 years
Hummelstown, PA

26



Zoe & Sarah, FR
Age 11-months
Somerset, NJ

27



Maya & Molly, ID
Age 6-months
Cold Lake, Alberta Canada

28



Grayson & Anna Claire FR
Age 4
Bladenboro, NC

29



Jaden & Jaxon, FR
Age 3
Allendale, MI

30



September/October 2015



31

Aidan & Ethan, ID
Age 7
Castle Rock, CO



32

Brayden & Mercedes, FR
Age 3 1/2
Surrey, BC Canada



33

Aria & Rayna, ID
Age 9-months
Manitowoc WI



34

Josiah & Jensen, FR
Age 11-months
London, KY



35

James & Caroline, FR
Age 3
Woodside, NY



36

Lilah & Brianah, FR
Age 18-months (in photo)
East Berlin, PA



37

Chase & Cole, FR
Age 4
Stevensville, MD



40

Ramsey & Grady, FR
Age 3 (in photo)
Chapin, SC



38

Matthew & Katelyn, FR
Age 11
Antioch, IL



39

Emma + Izabel, FR
Age 9
Fairfield, CT

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