



Welcome to the World of Multiples!

This time is full of excitement and plans as you prepare for your new arrivals. You can get your pregnancy and your babies off to a good start by understanding the risks of having multiples and choosing an experienced care provider who delivers complete prenatal care designed for someone expecting multiples.

Congratulations on your pregnancy. Families expecting multiples often find themselves joyous yet concerned about the coming months. The news of a pregnancy with multiples ushers you into a new world, that of a high risk pregnancy. Complications that are increased with a pregnancy with multiples are:

- Placental or umbilical cord problems
- Birth defects
- PIH (Pregnancy Induced Hypertension) in the mother
- Preterm labor and preterm delivery

Infants born preterm (before reaching 37 weeks of pregnancy) often have low birth weight and difficulty with breathing, feeding, and maintaining their body temperature. Infants born preterm usually need to be cared for in a special high-risk nursery. Forty-eight percent of twins and 78% of “supertwins” (triplets or more) are admitted to special-care nurseries. Although twins make up only 2% of all live births, they make up 15% of low- (less than 2500g or 5 lbs 8 oz.) and very low- (less than 1500 g or 3 lbs 5 oz.) birth-weight infants.

Care providers

With a high-risk pregnancy, you will want to find a care provider who is knowledgeable in caring for women expecting multiples. This may include either a transfer in care from your current care provider or co-management of your pregnancy with your current provider and a specialist in high-risk pregnancy such as a perinatologist.

A perinatologist is a doctor who specializes in high risk pregnancy. Two to three years of additional training beyond the four-year residency is required in obstetrics and gynecology. He or she is highly knowledgeable in monitoring a pregnancy with multiples and in watching for subtle signs and symptoms of a developing problem.



Questions?

Your questions are important. Call us if you have questions or concerns.

**Perinatal Education Program
(206) 598-4003**

**Maternity & Infant Center
(206) 598-4616**

**Prematurity Prevention Program
(206) 598-4070**

Prenatal care for a woman expecting multiples often includes a team of health care providers, including a nurse educator, nutritionist and social worker. Your prenatal care could include:

- More frequent clinic visits
- Ultrasound monitoring for growth and development of the babies, the length of your cervix (early shortening could signal a problem), and amniotic fluid levels
- Periodic cervical exams with each visit to note any changes in your cervix
- Education about the signs and symptoms of preterm labor, and when to contact your care provider
- Monitoring for vaginal infections
- Regular antepartum testing or NST (non-stress tests) during the third trimester to check for uterine contractions and the babies' well-being
- Nutrition and social situation assessment and counseling.



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
MEDICAL CENTER

Maternity and Infant Center

Box 356078
1959 NE Pacific St., Seattle, WA 98195
(206) 598-4600