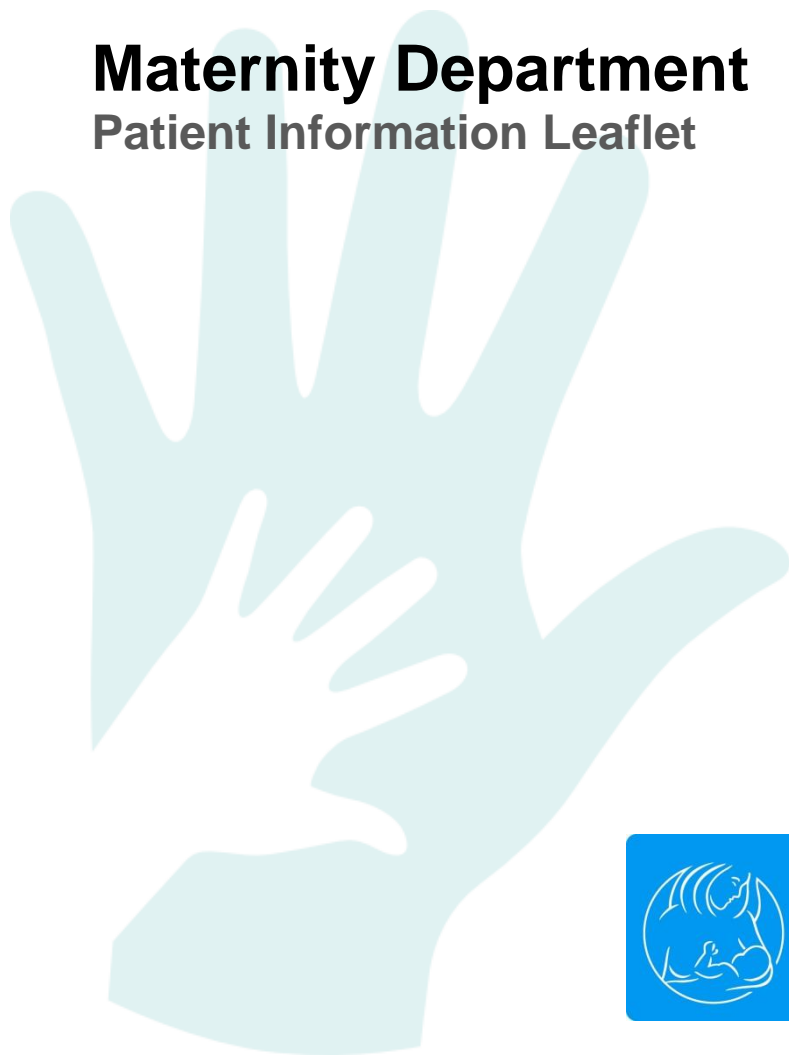


Multiple pregnancy

Maternity Department Patient Information Leaflet



Introduction

Finding out you are expecting two or more babies can be a big shock so do not be surprised if this is how you feel. Although twins are special they are not rare as they occur in approximately one in every 75 births.

There are two kinds of twins:

1. Identical (or monozygotic)

These twins come from one fertilised egg. The egg divides in two, creating identical twins who share the same genes. Identical twins are always the same sex, so if your twins are identical, you'll have two girls or two boys and they'll look very alike. Identical babies can also occur within a higher multiple pregnancy, for example, triplets.

2. Non identical (or dizygotic)

These happen when two fertilized eggs implant into a woman's womb (uterus) and are the more common form of twins. They are no more alike than any other siblings and can be different sexes. Non-identical twins are more common in women over 35 and in those who have had fertility treatment.

There are six kinds of triplets:

1. Trichorionic

Each baby has a separate placenta and amniotic sac.

2. Dichorionic triamniotic

One baby has a separate placenta and two of the babies share a placenta. All three babies have separate amniotic sacs.

3. Dichorionic diamniotic

One baby has a separate placenta and amniotic sac and two of the babies share a placenta and amniotic sac.

4. Monochorionic triamniotic

All three babies share one placenta but each has its own amniotic sac.

5. Monochorionic diamniotic

All three babies share one placenta. One baby has a separate amniotic sac and two babies share one sac.

6. Monochorionic monoamniotic

All three babies share a placenta and amniotic sac.

How will my pregnancy be managed?

All women with multiple pregnancies will be offered more frequent scans to monitor the growth and wellbeing of the babies. The frequency of scans will depend on the type of twins you are having. Your care will be led by a consultant obstetrician (doctor who specialises in pregnancy). This is because you have a greater risk of developing pregnancy problems such as high blood pressure. Therefore, it is very important that you and your babies are monitored regularly.

What problems can occur during multiple pregnancy?

Minor problems such as morning sickness, heartburn, ankle oedema (swelling) and varicose veins are common. The extra weight gained by expecting more than one baby can cause increased backache and tiredness.

Multiple pregnancies also have a slightly higher risk of:

- One or both babies being small
- Premature labour (labour that starts before 37 weeks) so it is therefore advisable to attend antenatal classes earlier
- Vaginal bleeding before labour
- Raised blood pressure
- Diabetes in pregnancy
- Pre-eclampsia (a condition related to high blood pressure and protein in your urine)

What choices do I have during birth?

You will usually decide how you want to give birth together with your obstetrician in the antenatal period. This will depend on the position of your babies and how your pregnancy has been.

Lots of women think they have to have a caesarean section with twins. In fact, more than 40 per cent of all twins are born vaginally and the process is similar to that of a single baby. In terms of multiple births, 59 per cent of multiple births are delivered by planned caesarean section nationally.

Whether you have a vaginal birth or caesarean section, the type of anaesthetic or pain management options will be discussed with you during an antenatal clinic appointment.

Can I breastfeed twins or triplets?

It is possible to breastfeed twins or triplets, if you wish to, and many women manage this very successfully. The midwives and breast feeding support workers will give you advice and support about this throughout your pregnancy and postnatal period.

Can I find out more?

The following websites have more information on multiple pregnancy:

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence –
<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg129/informationforpublic>

NHS Choice –
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/giving-birth-to-twins.aspx>

National Childbirth Trust –
<http://www.nct.org.uk/birth/multiple-births>

Patient.co.uk –
<http://www.patient.co.uk/doctor/multiple-pregnancy>

Twins and Multiple Births Association –
<http://www.tamba.org.uk/home>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Your community midwife 01384 456111 ext. 3358

or

Maternity Triage 01384 456111 ext. 3053

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/maternity/>

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ، ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔