

Quadruplets born to 65-year-old mom still in critical phase

May 27 2015, by Kirsten Grieshaber



Christoph Buehrer, left, director of neonatology at Charite Hospital and Wolfgang Henrich, director of gynecology at Charite Hospital, brief the media about the situation of 65-year old mother Annegret Raunigk and her quadruplets, in Berlin, Germany, Wednesday, May 27, 2015. The 65-year-old teacher from Berlin has given birth to a girl, Neeta and three boys, Dries, Bence and Fjonn, by cesarean section at the hospital on Tuesday May 19, 2015. (AP Photo/Markus Schreiber)

Doctors say the week-old quadruplets born prematurely to 65-year-old

Annegret Raunigk in Berlin are still in intensive care, but have been gaining a little weight and are being given their mother's milk through feeding tubes.

The [babies](#) were born during the 26th week of pregnancy at Berlin's Charite Hospital on May 19.

Five things to know about the quadruplets:

THE BABIES

Neeta and her three brothers—Dries, Bence and Fjonn— weighed between 655 grams (1 lb., 7 ounces) and 960 grams (2 lbs., 2 ounces) each at birth. Their exact weight today is not known because they are too fragile to be put on a scale.

Neeta is the smallest but is fitter than her three brothers, said Christoph Buehrer, Charite's director of neonatology. She underwent successful surgery this week to close two small holes in her intestines.

All four babies will remain in [intensive care](#) for several weeks and are supported by machines helping them breathe. "Breathing is their most critical vital function," said Buehrer, adding that it's not clear yet whether the children will have any long-term [health issues](#) because of the premature delivery.

THE MOTHER

Raunigk is believed to be the oldest mother to have ever delivered quadruplets, said Charite's director of obstetrics, Wolfgang Henrich.

She came to the hospital with premature contractions and [high blood pressure](#) and gave birth by cesarean section. She is now pumping breast

milk for her babies, and doctors say she didn't get any artificial hormones to start the lactation.

The school teacher already has 13 children, aged 9 to 44, from five other fathers. Because egg donation is illegal in Germany, she traveled to Ukraine to have donated, fertilized eggs transferred.

She says she decided to become pregnant again because her 9-year-old daughter wanted a younger sibling.

MEDICAL PROCEDURE

Four teams of specialized nurses and doctors were involved in delivering the [quadruplets](#). The babies were delivered at 11 a.m. on May 19 in a room heated to protect them from hypothermia and were immediately wrapped in thermal blankets. Ten extra nurses have been added to every shift at the hospital's neonatology ward to help care for the babies.

PROGNOSIS

It's too early to say if all four will grow up to be healthy children. In general, premies need more time to learn walking and speaking, but by the time they start school 70 percent of them have caught up in their development with other children, Buehrer said.

Both doctors stressed any possible health issues would be related to their early birth, not to the mother's age—since both eggs and sperm were donated by younger people.

PREGNANT AT 65

Both [doctors](#) refused to discuss the mother's controversial decision to have children at her age, saying it has no impact on their job of ensuring

the [children](#) are well treated.

"They need our help, they're getting our help," Buehrer said.

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