Expecting twins or triplets? What you should know before they arrive

October 18 2016

(HealthDay)—The number of U.S. couples expecting twins or even

triplets is on the rise, and these parents will have their hands full. Fortunately, there are many ways to prepare ahead of time, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Keep in mind that "multiples" are often born early and tend to be smaller than the average newborn. The AAP says parents may need to visit with their pediatrician more often than usual and reach out for help with feeding concerns or strategies.

Two or three newborns also use double or triple the number of diapers. But having multiples also means fitting more safety seats into the car, more clothing, more food and possibly even a larger home, the academy pointed out in a news release.

Multiples may share everything, but they are individuals and should be raised as such, the AAP advises. Identical twins, in particular, may seem like a duo, and parents might be tempted to give them the same things and the same amount of attention. But even genetically identical children have different personalities, thoughts and emotions. The AAP urges parents to acknowledge and support their differences to help them become happy and secure individuals.

Multiple newborns often demand most of their parents' energy and attention. They are also likely to attract a lot of attention from friends, relatives and even strangers on the street. If there are other children at home, this can fuel more than the usual sibling rivalry, according to pediatric experts.

To ease this potential tension, parents can try offering older children "double" or "triple" rewards for helping with the newborns. This also helps involve them in the family routine. It's essential for older kids to have daily "alone time" with Mom and Dad, the academy suggests.

As multiples grow, they may form exclusive bonds and may even communicate in a way only they can understand. Sometimes, they become unwilling to seek out other friendships. Giving multiples some time apart can help them develop friendships and ensure that other siblings aren't left out, the academy says.

And efforts to encourage multiples to spend time apart should start early to head off resistance. Most elementary schools place multiples in separate classes, the news release noted. Parents who are concerned about preventing separation anxiety can turn to their pediatrician for advice.

To head off mental and physical exhaustion, the AAP urges parents to try to catch up on sleep whenever possible, and suggests couples take turns handling nighttime feedings.

In addition, if there is wiggle room in the budget, hire some extra help for routine tasks like grocery shopping. Don't be afraid to ask family or friends for a hand—even for just a few hours each week, the academy recommends.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians provides more tips on how to prepare for twins.

Copyright © 2016 HealthDay. All rights reserved.

Citation: Expecting twins or triplets? What you should know before they arrive (2016, October 18) retrieved 19 April 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-10-twins-triplets.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.