

## **Survival Tips for Mothers of Multiples**

- First and foremost... when help is offered (for child care, grocery shopping, housecleaning, etc.) accept it graciously. Keep a calendar handy to schedule such offerings. Remember, you are handling two or more at a time, do what works best for you. Lower your standard – set realistic goals. Don't try to be Superwoman! You'll only make things harder.
- Use swings, especially during dinner so that you can eat and at any other time you feel it is helpful. This generally has a calming effect for babies.
- Multiples generally enjoy being together. Put two or three babies in the same crib, on each end with a rolled towel between them until they are too active to sleep together.
- At nap or bed times, put your babies in their beds, while still awake, so they will learn how to fall asleep on their own. You can do this very early on.
- Babies need not be bathed daily. Sponge baths are perfectly acceptable (especially the face and diaper area).
- Prepare bottles once a day, in the morning or the night before.
- Nursing moms...learn to nurse two at a time to save time! This is where a nursing pillow comes in handy. Don't be afraid to ask another multiple moms who were successfully for some helpful hints.
- Bottle-fed babies...use bouncy seats, one on each side of you for a time saver.
- Feed babies with the same spoon unless one is sick.
- Set up 2 changing stations that are convenient for you ( have one upstairs and one downstairs)
- Plan outings wisely...preferably at your children's' best time of day. Feed them before you go out or take food with you in the event the outing is longer than expected. Take advantage of nursing rooms at shopping malls or sit in a locked car in the passenger seat or rear seat to feed them.
- Park next to or near cart corrals for easy access to shopping carts.
- Whenever possible, do grocery shopping alone! This may be your only time alone for the week. If not possible, try one in a front pack and one in the shopping cart or two shopping carts (pull and push). Infant seats will fit in most shopping carts. Kroger, Publix, and Target have carts with 2 additional seats.
- Several malls have family bathrooms near the Food Courts. There is room for the entire family and strollers.
- Replenish your diaper bag after each use (you may want to keep it in your car).
- Keep a basket or large bag in your car with extra essentials (diaper, wipes, plastic bags, bottled formula, water or juice, change of clothes, underwear, etc.)
- Keep a First Aid Kit in your vehicle (Band-Aids, Antiseptic pads, antibiotic ointment, bee sting kit, Tylenol/Motrin, etc). You can make one of your own or purchase one fully stocked.

- Last, but not least...SLEEP...this is without a doubt the hardest issue we all face. First you must have realistic expectations (you may never “sleep through the night” as long as you have children living in your home!). Realize that all babies are different, what works for one may not work for the other(s). Scheduled feedings are important. Wake sleeping babies on schedule, try feeding simultaneously or back to back (whatever works best for you), and at night, if one wakes up, wake the other (if you don’t you may find you’ve just dozed off and guess what, the other one is now awake!).

## **Survival Tips for You**

- The number one priority is, take care of yourself!
- Eat regular and healthy meals.
- Take a shower or bath everyday...you will be refreshed and feel like a human! This may mean getting up 15-30 minutes earlier than the babies or using their first nap as your time. If this doesn’t work, try putting babies in infant or bouncy seats outside the shower door, lather up and enjoy. The worst that can happen is that they will cry!
- Rest or nap when the babies are sleeping. You need more rest than you need a clean house. If you don’t want to sleep, treat yourself to a good book or magazine, bubble bath, exercise, write a letter or call a special friend. This may not be an every day thing, but you should rest or nap at least 2-3 times a week.
- Set aside special time for you and your spouse as often as possible (this may be once a week or once a month, whatever works out). A “date” out is always nice, but you may not be able to leave the house for various reasons (babysitter, financially, or just feel uncomfortable leaving home). You might rent a movie, plan a candlelight dinner for after babies’ bedtime, or just spend some quiet time together.
- REMEMBER...be flexible, the best-laid plans don’t always come together. If it doesn’t work once, try, try again – don’t give up! Solutions are never permanent when kids and spouses are involved and needs are constantly changing!

## **Menu Planning**

- Try to plan a month at a time. If this is not feasible, try weekly or bi-weekly planning.
- Fill in all the nights you don’t have to cook (i.e. Birthdays, socials, church dinners, etc.).
- Fill in any difficult days (i.e. late practices, company coming, etc.). If you have a busy day ahead, plan an easy meal. Have sandwiches for dinner.
- Have frozen vegetables on hand even if you prefer fresh in case you don’t have time to wash and prepare the fresh vegetables for cooking.
- Plan at least one meatless meal per week (this is suggested by dietitians). This meal could include any of the following: baked potatoes and salad, pizza, fried rice, soup, pasta with cheese sauce, etc.
- Try to double recipes that can be used another time or make extra of items like rice to use with another meal latter in the week.
- Shop every two weeks (or once a month) to save time and money. Frequent trips to the grocery store cause extra spending.