

Feeding Policy

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| Initially produced: | Due for review by Trustees |
| November 2011 | November 2021 |
| Produced by KR | |
| Reviewed Nov 2017 & July 2019 | |

According to the 2010¹ Infant Feeding Survey², which is conducted throughout the UK, breastfeeding rates were lower in twins than in singletons. This figure is based on 144 responses and all were from twin mums.

The survey found that most mothers of multiple births (78%) had introduced formula by the time their baby was a week old. Most multiple birth mothers who had stopped breastfeeding by stage 2 (when babies were seven to ten months old) said they would have liked to have carried on.

The survey also showed the use of expressed breastmilk was widespread – suggesting multiple birth mothers did this when their babies were in neonatal.

International research findings suggest that breastfeeding has many health benefits for both mother and babies. It is also widely acknowledged that breast milk is the optimal form of nutrition for babies. Consequently, trustees at Twins Trust agreed that we should continue to promote and encourage breastfeeding as an option for expectant and new mothers to consider.

While breastfeeding is accepted as the gold standard, many of our families will give their babies formula milk. Some parents of multiples will elect to feed their babies formula milk from very early on and others will choose to supplement breastmilk with formula milk at some point.

Trustees were of the view that our families should be empowered by being made aware of all their options, which include breastfeeding, mother’s own expressed breastmilk, donor breastmilk, formula feeding and mixed feeding. They believed that informing and empowering our parents was of paramount importance.

The Trustees were very conscious that feeding decisions can be difficult for parents of multiples and can be influenced by many factors. Therefore support for parents to consider their options and to make the decisions that feels right for them and their family is essential in the early

postnatal period and over time as their needs change. This approach is in line with feeding guidance for professionals produced by the Multiple Birth Foundation.

Trustees came to the conclusion that in order to support all parents of multiples in their feeding decisions it would be inappropriate for Twins Trust to seek or accept funding from sources which promote formula milk. This is in line with the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk substitutes.

¹ *The 2015 Infant Feeding Survey has been cancelled. This could have huge implications for the provision of evidence-based support in the area of infant feeding, and so for the health of the UK. It is symptomatic of how far down the government's agenda infant feeding has slipped, despite the huge body of evidence that raising breastfeeding rates is vital to both the NHS and the economy.*

² <https://files.digital.nhs.uk/publicationimport/pub08xxx/pub08694/infant-feeding-survey-2010-consolidated-report.pdf>