When I found out we were having twins, I was in shock, disbelief, and walked around in a daze for a few weeks.

How was I going to provide for two new babies -- at the same time? We were going to be adding two hungry mouths to our already young family (two and three year old boys).

A twin pregnancy is commonly a pregnancy on the fast-track, since twins deliver at an average of 36 weeks gestation. Your babies may come before then or after then. You just never know. So the key is to be prepared.

Here are 7 tips for surviving those first few weeks when your twins are home from the hospital.
Tip #1

You Must Participate

If you've had a child before, you may have been able to let your wife handle a lot of the baby care. Sorry friend, those days are over.

With twins, you'll need all hands on deck.

Get used to the idea now that you'll be changing lots of diapers, feeding babies all the time (and at all hours of the night), giving baths, and getting them dressed.

When both twin babies are crying for attention, you'll need four hands to care for them.

Take heart, it doesn't all have to be you and the babies' mother.
Tip #2

Get Help

Yes, You Need Help

Don't be afraid to ask for help. You need to line up help well before you need it.

Ideally, you can arrange live-in help. Someone that will take the night shift with you and help out with the twins when you're back at work.

We lined up about two months of live-in help by having friends and family members stay with us one at a time.

My wife, myself, and that third person would do a three-day rotation on who got to sleep at night. The other two would wake up with our girls to feed and change them as needed.

Having an extra set of hands was key to us surviving those early days with our newborn twins.

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Tip #3

Identifying Twins

Which is Which?

We had identical twins so one of the big challenges for us was how to tell them apart. Even non-identical, or fraternal, twins may look very similar upon arrival.

You need a system in place to know how you will identify each baby. This is important for your sanity, tracking who needs to eat, and being able to identify which kid is in the baby pictures ten years from now.

There are several schools of thought on identifying twins. We opted for one that would be obvious at a distance and in pictures: color coding. We dressed one girl in warm colors (pinks, reds, yellows) and the other in cool colors (blues, greens, purples).

Color coding works best once you get them home from the hospital. If you are worried, keep their hospital name bands on until you are ready.
Tip #4

Record Keeping

Good Records = Sanity

During your hospital stay, the nurses will have you track feeding times, amounts, and wet/poopy diapers. You need to continue this regimen when you return home.

This is both for your sanity and to make sure the babies get the nutrients they need.

After days of non-stop feeding and diaper changes, you won't know who ate last or when unless you write it down.

You'll be sleep deprived and not thinking clearly, so delegate remembering to a piece of paper.

You will hit your stride and patterns will emerge where record keeping isn't needed any more. However, in the beginning, you need it. Write it down!
Tip #5

Forget Your House

It doesn't matter now

When the twins come home, you're not going to get anything else done.

Forget the dishes, cleaning bathrooms, or mowing the grass.

Everything is going to be put on hold. You will physically not be able to juggle the daily routines you are used to in addition to your newborn twins.

So what do you do? Get helpers.

Ideally you could get a maid but that financially wasn't an option for us. We paid some neighbor kids on the cheap to help around the house. I also found a lawn service to mow our grass the summer our girls came.
Tip #6

Feed Yourself

Don't forget you!

You will not have the energy to survive your newborn twins unless you are eating. Just like the household chores, food preparations and dinner will not happen unless you prepare ahead of time.

During our twin pregnancy, we stuffed our freezer with ready-to-cook meals. These were ready-made frozen meals that we could throw in the oven, crock-pot, or microwave to feed my wife and I with minimal effort.

You can make your own favorite dishes and freeze them, buy up the grocery store's frozen food section, or go to a local make-your-own-freezer-meal service.

You'll probably want these freezer meals for the later stages of pregnancy through the first couple months after delivery.
Tip #7

Make a Helper List

Since you asked...

We've talked about getting live-in help. Unfortunately, that is pretty big commitment for those other than immediate family and really close friends.

However, as soon as you start telling people that you are having twins, a common reply will be, "If there is anything I can do to help, please let me know."

Well, my friend, you better write that person's name down, since you are going to need all the help you can get.

Don't be shy! Commit people to help you.

Ask the volunteer if they could bring your family a dinner, or come help with the babies on a specific day. Be very specific in your request and you'll be surprised at the number of people that will help.
Go!

Be Prepared

These tips should help you hit the ground running with your new twins.


You can also browse the archives on the Dad’s Guide to Twins blog: www.dadsguidetotwins.com

Best of luck to you,
Joe Rawlinson

P.S. If you have a specific question, feel free to email me:
joe@dadsguidetotwins.com