

# Avoiding twins – single embryo transfer (SET)



## Fertility Facts

When IVF started, twins and triplets were common because two or three embryos were often transferred to give a reasonable chance of pregnancy. But even twins carry an increased risk for both mother and babies. Single embryo transfer (SET) is now strongly encouraged, helped by the excellent survival and pregnancy rates for spare embryos frozen as blastocysts.

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Having twins doubles or triples many risks of pregnancy and childbirth for the mother and her babies. We have listed some of these in the table below:

Risk	Singleton pregnancy	Twin pregnancy	Risk for twins
<b>To the mother</b>			
Hospitalisation for ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome (OHSS) in an IVF pregnancy	4.6 % of pregnancies	9% of pregnancies	2 times higher
Mother dying in childbirth	5 per 100,000 births	15 per 100,000 births	3 times higher
<b>To the child(ren)</b>			
Stillbirth or death soon after birth (neonatal and perinatal death)	2.8% of children	6.3% of children	2.5 times higher
Baby admitted to neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) after birth	15% of children	48% of children	3 times higher
A serious brain haemorrhage around birth			5 times higher
Serious infection			3 times higher
Respiratory distress			6 times higher
Cerebral palsy	0.23% of children	1.3% of children	5 times higher
Some handicap	2.5% of deliveries	7.4% of deliveries	3 times higher
<b>Overall medical risks</b>			
Estimate of any problem (death, abnormality, or some handicap)	6% of deliveries	20% of deliveries	3 times higher
<b>To the family</b>			
Difficulty meeting material needs	2.4%	18.2%	8 times higher
Lower quality of life	4.7%	12.1%	2.5 times higher
Maternal depression	15.9%	22.9%	1.5 times higher
Maternal stress	7.1%	13.8%	2 times higher



Contact us

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