MULTIPLE BIRTHS

During the 10 year period, 1989 – 1998, 3,912 infants were born in Maine who were part of a multiple birth set – twins, triplets, or quadruplets.

Over that time, there has been a significant increase in the number of multiple birth babies born each year in Maine. In 1998, 13,723 babies were born to Maine women; 1 of every 32 of these infants (432) were twins or triplets. This was a significant increase over 1989 when 1 of every 46 Maine infants (382) was from a multiple birth pregnancy and is consistent with what was experienced nationwide.¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Sets of Multiple Births: 1989 – 1998*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triplet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quadruplets</td>
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¹ Pregnancies that involve more than 1 fetus are coded as multiple births even when not all fetuses survive.

Babies who were members of multiple birth sets were more likely to be born with low birth weight (less than 5½ pounds) than babies who were the result of singleton births; although less than 5% of singleton babies were born with low birth weight, nearly 50% of babies from multiple births were.

Ninety five percent of women who were pregnant with more than 1 baby started prenatal care as early as they wanted – 85% of women with singleton pregnancies started as early as they wanted.²

Increased age and multiple births were positively correlated. Women 45 and older were 10 times more likely to have a multiple birth than women 15 to 19 years old.

Women who experienced multiple births were more likely to have complications during labor than women with singleton births; in fact, 55% of multiple birth pregnancies resulted in complications of labor compared to 40% of mothers who had singleton births. Breech deliveries were 7 times more prevalent in multiple birth deliveries.


For further data on this topic, please contact:
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