



**RAISING
MULTIPLES**
a MOST Community

Sextuplet, Septuplet & Octuplet Fact Sheet

The birth of octuplets in January 2009 brought the public's attention to higher-order multiples (triplets, quadruplets, and more). Raising Multiples, a MOST Community, has been working with families of higher-multiples for well over 20 years, and is pleased to share some facts about the highest of higher-order multiples: sextuplets, septuplets, and octuplets.

What is often misunderstood about these exceptional births is that:

Not all higher-order multiples are the result of fertility treatments. We estimate that a little over 15% of all triplet or higher pregnancies are spontaneous conceptions, not the result of any fertility treatments. Also, the majority of quintuplet and higher births are not the result of procedures like in-vitro fertilization (IVF) or other assisted reproductive technology (ART), but rather the use of fertility medications: a much lower cost/risk treatment option.

The birth of quintuplets and higher is still extremely rare with fewer than 20 sets of quintuplets and one or fewer sets of sextuplets or more born in the US each year.

Fertility treatments cannot always be precisely regulated. In fact, using ovulation-stimulating medications alone or with insemination procedures makes controlling the outcome much more difficult than using procedures like IVF.

The procedure known as a multi-fetal reduction, sometimes called selective reduction, entails both risks and benefits for pregnancies of triplets or more. For families that do choose to reduce, the decision often results in a loss that can be emotionally difficult, especially in pregnancies that were very much anticipated and desired.

Families faced with a pregnancy of quintuplets or more must contend with a difficult situation during the pregnancy and many challenges after birth. Even couples who do undergo fertility treatments to conceive are, in almost all cases, truly seeking the birth of one healthy baby, not a multiple birth because they garner national media attention or free gifts.

With the exception of a small number of high-profile cases, most families of higher-order multiples will care for their children with the help and support, including financial support, of only family members, friends and for the lucky ones, a small handful of local volunteers. Many care for their children completely on their own.

Without question a higher-order multiple pregnancy is riskier than a singleton pregnancy, but with recent advances in the care of premature infants, many infants from a higher-order multiple pregnancy do better than some of the data that is quoted suggests.

Raising Multiples, and our daughter organization PremieCare, fully support any efforts to reduce the number of higher-order multiple conceptions that result from treatments for

infertility, as well as medical advancements that improve the outcomes of infants born prematurely.

At the same time, we remain committed to our mission of supporting the parents who face difficult decisions once they find they are expecting triplets or more, as well as the challenges they will face in providing for their multiple birth children after delivery. With support and education, expectant parents can learn more about what they can do to help have the best possible pregnancy outcome, prepare for their children's care after birth, and provide for their children's physical, developmental, educational, emotional and mental well-being the way all parents hope to do.

	Sextuplets (6)	Septuplets (7)	Octuplets (8)
How many have been born?	<p>At least 80 and possibly as many as 175 births in the world have resulted from a pregnancy involving 6 babies.</p> <p>A sextuplet or higher pregnancy will likely go to 29-30 weeks gestation or earlier.</p>	<p>Around 40-50 births in the world have resulted from a pregnancy involving 7 babies.</p>	<p>Somewhere between 11 and 19 births in the world have resulted from a pregnancy involving 8 babies.</p>
How many have survived?	<p>At least 35 sets of sextuplets, and possibly more, resulted in 6 live births where the babies survived beyond infancy.</p> <p>According to the data in MOST's records, 1/3 of the sextuplets births in the US since 1973 have resulted all 6 surviving, and almost 60% have had at least 1, and frequently more survivors.</p>	<p>Although many septuplets do not survive to birth or beyond infancy, at least 3 sets of septuplets, and possibly 1 more, did result in 7 live births where the babies survived beyond infancy.</p> <p>Several other cases of septuplets resulted in 1 or more survivors.</p>	<p>The set of octuplets born in January 2009 in California may be the first set in the world where all 8 babies survived beyond infancy.</p>
Famous Births	<p>The first set to have all 6 survive were born in South Africa in 1974. In the US the first set of sextuplets to survive were born in 1993.</p> <p>The busiest years for sextuplets were 2004 when 7 sets were born</p>	<p>The first set where all 7 septuplets survived took place in Iowa in 1997, and the most recent all surviving set of septuplets was born to a woman in Egypt in August 2008. The third surviving set was born to a woman in Saudi</p>	<p>One set of octuplets was born in 1998 in Texas. All 8 babies were live births although sadly, one baby passed away a week after being born.</p> <p>Other cases of octuplet births have been</p>

	<p>and 2008 when 6 sets were born. In 2004 the US alone had 6 sextuplet births where it is believed that all 36 babies survived.</p>	<p>Arabia in 1998.</p> <p>Other cases of septuplet births have been reported in the UK, Italy, France, Portugal, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Columbia, Saudi Arabia, India, California, Virginia, and Indiana.</p>	<p>reported in Algeria, Mexico, Turkey, the UK, Spain, and Italy.</p>
<p>What is the cost of raising them?</p> <p>*Financial figures calculated using the U.S. Dept of Agriculture Cost of Raising a Child Calculator</p>	<p>The cost for a cesarean delivery of sextuplets could be around \$150,000.</p> <p>Parents would need 394 hours a week to care for sextuplet infants.</p> <p>A middle-class family can expect to spend at least \$55,000 on housing, food, clothing, transportation, health, education and other expenses for sextuplets during the first year, more if their infants were born very prematurely. (This would include over \$5000 in diapers alone.)*</p> <p>A family with sextuplets might spend over \$1 million by the time the sextuplets graduate high school.*</p> <p>A sextuplet family can expect, for children born in 2008, to spend over \$500,000 to send them to a public university.*</p>	<p>The cost for a cesarean delivery of septuplets could be around \$175,000.</p> <p>Parents would need 460 hours a week to care for septuplet infants.</p> <p>A middle-class family can expect to spend at least \$64,000 on housing, food, clothing, transportation, health, education and other expenses for septuplets during the first year, more if their infants were born very prematurely. (This would include over \$6000 in diapers alone.)*</p> <p>A family with septuplets might spend over \$1.2 million by the time the septuplets graduate high school.*</p> <p>A septuplet family can expect, for children born in 2008, to spend over \$600,000 to send them to a public university.*</p>	<p>The costs for a cesarean delivery of octuplets could be around \$200,000.</p> <p>Parents would need over 525 hours a week to care for octuplet infants.</p> <p>A middle-class family can expect to spend over \$73,000 on housing, food, transportation, clothing, health, education and other expenses for octuplets during the first year, more if their infants were born very prematurely. (This would include almost \$7000 in diapers alone.)*</p> <p>A family with octuplets might spend around \$1.4 million by the time the octuplets graduate high school.*</p> <p>An octuplet family can expect, for children born in 2008, to spend almost \$700,000 to send them to a public university.*</p>
<p>Other Notable</p>	<p>According to the Guinness Book of Records, the record for multiple births belongs to an Australian woman who gave birth in June 1971 to 9 babies</p>		

Multiple Births

(nonuplets): 2 were stillborn, while the other 7 survived for six days beyond birth.

An Italian mother conceived 15 babies in 1971, but the pregnancy was not taken to term.

A mother from outside of Moscow holds the record for most children born. She had a total of 69 children after giving birth to 16 sets of twins, 7 sets of triplets, and 4 sets of quadruplets. Sixty-seven of the 69 children born between 1725 and 1756 are believed to have survived infancy.