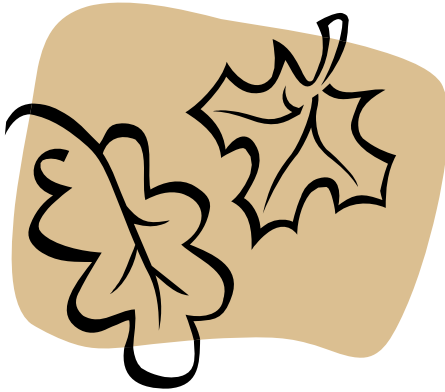




October 2006



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Dear DDTC,

Another summer is over and in spite of losing the good weather at the start of the school holidays and getting it back at the start of the new term we all had a great break.

I always see September as the start of a new year. Even BC (before children) September always seemed to be the time to resume serious work again after a summer of being unable to get anything finalised! I still feel that this is a time to set out my aims and objectives for the term ahead. So what do I have in mind? Well, the "super-mum" inside me says we'll do lots of arts and crafts, we'll cook and read and spend days in Dulwich Woods or exploring our great capital city. We won't watch too much TV, we won't trash the house and we certainly won't shout, hit and bite our siblings. I think in reality we may not achieve all I'd hoped for, but hey... I'm starting to accept my lower standards these days!

What I have achieved over the summer is that I've actually done some of those jobs that I just

haven't had the time or energy to do since having the twins. I was told when they were born that the first year is the worst but you won't remember it (so take lots of photos), and that by the age of three you will be able to do "normal" family things! I must admit that I have found this to be the case, and it has been quite liberating over the summer to go out for the day without pushchairs, nappies, bottles, bibs and baby food. I've even swapped my well-worn rucksack for a roomy handbag!

Of course, the other big change is nursery! Wow! regular child-free time. I actually started the boys with one morning together and one morning on their own. This has been great. Not only do they learn to be away from each other but for one morning a week they get my undivided attention. (It also reminded me how easy just one child is to entertain!)

Anyway, hope you achieve all you want to this autumn.

Ruth Butler

Editor and mum to Laura 8,
Matthew & Jonathan 3.

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Ruth Butler 020 8355 4206

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Disclaimer:

The Dulwich & District Twins Club is a self-help support group run by mothers and fathers for parents of twins, triplets or more. Any advice given or suggestions made are based entirely on personal experiences and are not to be taken as endorsed by DDTC or TAMBA. Similarly, adverts are responded to at the risk of the individual.

**Useful Numbers & Websites
(feedback welcome)**

Twins & Multiple Births Association:

www.tamba.org.uk / 0870 770 3305

The Multiple Births Foundation:

www.multiplebirths.org.uk / 020 8383 3519

For Triplets+ Families:

www.tripletconnection.org

www.mostonline.org (mothers of supertwins)

www.potatonet.org (parents of twins and triplets online)

www.twinstriplets.co.uk

Premature Babies:

www.earlybaby.co.uk

www.bliss.org.uk

**Twin-to-Twin Transfusion
Syndrome:**

www.twin2twin.org

General Multiples:

www.twinsclub.co.uk

www.twinstuff.com

www.twinshelp.com

www.twinsmagazine.com

www.twinslist.org

www.twinonline.co.uk

www.twinsthings.co.uk

www.2became4.com

www.twinsworld.com

www.unitedtwindom.com

www.kiddicare.com

www.lotsofbabies.com

When you need Support with Crying Babies:

Cry-sis: 020 7404 5011

Breastfeeding Support:

Kings Breastfeeding Clinic: 020 7346 3833

NCT Breastfeeding Line: 0870 444 8708

Breastfeeding Network: 0870 900 8787

La Leche League: 020 7242 1278

www.breastfeeding.com

National Organisation of Mothers of Twins clubs (USA): www.nomotc.org

Australian Multiple Births Organisation: www.amba.org.au

General Parenting:

Parentline Plus: 0808 800 2222 / www.parentlineplus.org.uk

www.parentsatwork.org.uk

www.raisingkids.co.uk

www.familiesonline.co.uk

www.forparentsbyparents.com

www.childcarelink.gov.uk

Full-time Mothers: www.fulltimemothers.org

Home-Dads:

www.homedad.org.uk

www.fathermag.com



Welcome

Naomi Alflatt and Piers Bravery
Mae and Elsa 28.12.05

Tiggy Bower and Dominic Hiatt
Horace and Coco 17.01.06

Anna and John Condliffe
Molly and Alice 16.02.05

Juliet Davidson and Robin Leach
Twins due December 2006

Rachelle and Thomas Keyes
Twins due October 2006

Alex and Gregory Knox
Twins due August 2006

Melissa and Peter Sollich
Leo and Anna 22.06.06

TAMBA TWINLINE

0800 138 0509

Free telephone
helpline

10am-1pm and
7pm-10pm daily



Preparing for Twins and Triplets

Meetings for parents and grandparents
expecting a multiple birth with an illustrated talk.

All meetings are 7.30pm-9.30pm

Seminar Room. Hammersmith House, DuCane Road,
London W12

**Wednesday 18th Oct.
Wednesday 29th Nov.**

**For more information or to book a place
Tel. 020 8383 3519**

Or E-mail: mbf@hhnt.nhs.uk

Website: www.multiplebirths.org.uk

DIARY DATES

BABY & TODDLER GROUP

A great place to meet other mums and carers of multiples and mums-of-multiples-to-be!

1st and 3rd Tuesdays of every month 10am to 11.45am.
(including school holidays)

- Free parking nearby
- Accessible for twin buggies
- Plenty of toys
- Craft activity for toddlers
- Separate area for babies
- Song time and story

Herne Hill United Church Hall
(top of Red Post Hill)
SE24

Members £1, non-members £2
per family.
(Includes refreshments)



Write these dates in your diary!

- Tuesday 3rd & 17th October 2006
- Tuesday 7th & 21st November 2006
- Tuesday 5th & 19th December 2006
- Tuesday 16th January 2007 (There is no group on Tues. 2nd January)
- Tuesday 6th & 20th February 2007

Ask Sarah miller for more details.

Help Needed

Sam Jones still manages the website in spite of moving to Reading! She doesn't want to do it for ever so if you have the skills necessary or would be willing to learn, please let me know so that we can maintain this great resource.

Ruth Butler [email: ruth_butler@btinternet.com](mailto:ruth_butler@btinternet.com)

DIARY DATES

DOING ANYTHING ON FRIDAY?

Write these dates on your calendar, switch on your twin radar, and head for these places, where you will find at least one other twins club member (probably yawning).

ALL MEETINGS ARE FROM 10AM

Friday 6th October Crystal Palace Park Playground

Meet by the swings (or café if wet), then a wander around the lake and dinosaurs, weather permitting.

Free car park in Thicket Road.

Friday 3rd November Horniman Gardens

Meet in the café, followed by stroll around museum and/or gardens (complete with goats, chickens, ducks, etc) depending on weather. Free parking on street in Wood Vale or Sydenham Rise.

Friday 1st December Dulwich Park

Meet by the swings or in the café if it's torrential. Free parking.

Friday 5th January Brockwell Park

Meet at the café. Free parking in surrounding roads or in car park.

Friday 2nd February Crystal Palace Park Playground

Meet by the swings (or café if wet), then a wander around the lake and dinosaurs, weather permitting. Free car park in Thicket Road



Contact Jan on (020) 8761 5407 or mobile 07932 023887 for more details

Summer Picnic

The sun was shining, the gazebo was erected, the blankets were laid out; we were all ready for our yearly summer picnic!

It always is a relaxing afternoon (as much as it can be with young children!) but this year was particularly good. The picnic and Christmas party are two occasions where we meet those who can't normally come to other regular activities and it was great to see grandparents and other relatives joining us. And yes, we were all impressed by Melissa and Peter who came with their three week old babies!

A particular highlight of the afternoon was the fun and excitement (and childcare) provided by Helen and Simon's "super-duper" bucket bike. Four children at a time were piled in and off they all went for a ride around the park!

As the evening approached some made their way home, some gravitated towards the café and others stayed to play until exhaustion set in and we all went home to bed. (The children were pretty tired too!)



Christmas Party



Saturday 2nd December 2006

3–5pm

at

Herne Hill United Church hall
(top of Red Post Hill)

Please bring.....

- Small ready wrapped and clearly labelled presents for your children, to go into Santa's sack.
- Some party food to share.

Drinks (hot/cold, alcoholic/non-alcoholic) and snacks available for grown-ups.

Membership Renewal

Jane is still waiting for people to renew their membership.

It creates a lot of work for Jane if she has to chase people up so we would be very grateful if you could send your subscriptions as soon as possible.

Please use either the form on the back page or download one from the website. The next newsletter will not be sent to those with outstanding membership payments. Sorry!

Please also check that your details on the membership list are correct and notify Jane if not.

Jane Pepperall can be contacted at j-pepperall@dfid.gov.uk

Parenting with multiples in mind.

By Yasmin Conway

One of my twin boys (aged two) had an appointment with a speech therapist earlier on this year. I had no choice but to take them both to the assessment. The therapist gave them some toys, but they both wanted the only red lorry and.... well, you can guess the rest. They screamed their way through the entire forty minute assessment. I tried to ignore them but eventually my ears started to really hurt. I changed to Distraction Strategy; “*look boys! A giant ant!*” It didn’t help. Even the emergency-bribe-biscuits were a dismal failure.

“*I don’t think we can do much today!*” shouted the therapist above the din of stereo screaming whilst a cheese biscuit (organic) hit her squarely in the face, “*maybe next time you could bring Kiran on his own?*” I smiled apologetically and took my fab-but-feral boys back home. Not long after this episode, I saw the advert via the twin club for a “Parenting with multiples in mind” course. I couldn’t have replied quick enough.

“Are you talking about us?”



At the first meeting it became clear that, whilst everyone had different reasons for signing up, we all had huge amounts of common experience and frustration to share. That was a great support and really dispelled that “I’m going slightly mad” feeling.

The course was run by a Clinical Psychologist and funded by Tamba. It consisted of seven evening sessions held weekly in a local church hall. The sessions were broken down into the following subjects:

1. Being a parent of multiples -coping strategies, support networks, the “good enough” parent.
2. Family relationships-how did our own parents influence us by the way they parented? How does the experience of having multiples within the family affect all the different roles? What is your parenting style?
3. Enhancing individuality-ideas and how to achieve “special time”.
4. Managing behaviour-setting boundaries, encouraging acceptable behaviour, managing sibling rivalry.
5. Managing behaviour -the pyramid of parenting skills and strategies and how these affect our children’s behaviour.
6. Development and the importance of play in multiples- ideas for play, multiples at nursery or school.
7. Focusing on the future and preparing for challenges ahead.

I really enjoyed the practical nature of the course and the way in which each session was tailored to the group. I would really like to thank Tamba for organising this.

More courses are going to be held. Don’t miss out!

For details of next and nearest course see
www.tamba.org.uk / telephone 08707703305.

Comments From Other parents Who Attended

- It’s encouraging to know that we’re all dealing with the same sort of issues.
- It’s ok to ignore bad behaviour
- Some of the advice was so simple yet so effective, for example using positive language. Instead of “don’t drop the cup” say “could you keep your cup on the table”
- Our “naughty step” gives us all time to calm down.
- It was helpful to understand some of the theory behind the advice.
- It was good to meet other parents with twins and exchange helpful ideas for managing behaviour.
- I found that I was always saying “wait a minute”, I am now trying to say “when I have..... then I will.....”
- It gave us the opportunity to reflect on our parenting methods.
- I wish we’d had this two years ago!
- I found it helpful to discuss schooling (and nurseries) and the pros and cons of putting the children in different classes.
- I feel less of a failure as a parent since realising that my twins’ awful behaviour is “normal”.

Help, I've Just Had Twins!

For many of us having twins is our first experience of parenting and so we're very much thrown into the deep-end! Here are some practical things which may make life easier.

Changing Times

- Keep supplies of nappies, wipes and bags downstairs as well as upstairs.
- If you have a baby that likes to put their hands "down below" while you're changing them, give them something to hold in both hands
- For toddlers that continually try to escape, place the changing mat in a corner so that the walls stop escape on two sides so that you only have to guard the other two!
- Use a small wash-bag or something similar filled with nappies, wipes and bags which you keep filled up and leave it in the bag you take out with you. You'll never be caught without enough supplies.
- Buy a Hand cleaner solution for those times you can't wash your hands

Going Out

- Invest in a small rucksack and keep everything you need to go out in it eg. Nappy supplies, reins, sun-screen, hats.
- A rucksack leaves you with two hands free to catch escaping toddlers
- Get out of the house at least once a day, even if it's just to walk once around the block. It's particularly important if you're feeling a bit down.

Play

- For young children, put all their toys with them onto a double duvet cover. When you need to clear up just lift up the four corners and viola! The room is tidy again.
- Don't rush to comfort a child each time they have a minor bump or fall. Smile and sound a cheery "woops! up you get" This helps the child to be distracted and they are less prone to whinginess
- Use glossy magazines as a cheap form of entertainment
- Make a book for each of them containing photos of family and familiar objects eg. The house, their bedroom, the family pet

Sleeping

- Buy baby snuggle sacks if they kick off their covers
- As babies have to be changed so much, use babygros if it's reasonably clean at bedtime you don't need to change the baby again at bedtime
- Use muslin squares in the cot under baby's head. It can be changed daily instead of changing the sheets
- Babies do better with routines (some have found Gina Ford's book on twins helpful).
- Instead of getting up in the night to warm feeds, make up fresh feeds before you go to bed and put your nights supply in a coolbag by your bed. They should be lukewarm by the time you need them. Alternatively, get the babies used to drinking their milk cold (no, not chilled!)

General

- Take lots of photos during the first two years and label them. (the first two years are very much a blur!)
- Jot down special times in a notebook. Not only the usual things like cutting first tooth or taking their first steps, but things that will make you smile in the future (like the day my twins did some lovely hand-painting on their bedroom wall using Sudocrem!!!)

Planning Evening

Monday 13th November

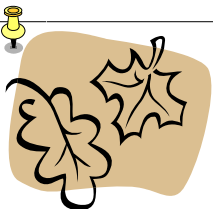
We've got a Christmas party to organise and we'd like to plan other events for Twins Club members

These evenings are a great opportunity to come and share your ideas over a glass of wine in a relaxed child-free environment.

Time: 8pm

Place: Charlotte's house
55, Thurlow Hill, SE21 8JW

RSVP 020 86702285 or nickandcharlotte@beckett88a.freeserve.co.uk



Request For Proof Reading

This is now the fifth edition of the newsletter that I have edited and I'm sorry to say that there hasn't been a single mistake-free edition—it's a good job this isn't paid work!

Anyway, I'm looking for someone who would be willing to read through the newsletter before it goes off to the printers and am happy for feedback on content as well as grammar!

If you could do this please contact me.
Ruth Butler email: ruth_butler@btinternet.com



Baking with Twins

By Sam Jones

I have always baked with my children, partly because I love the taste of home made cakes, but mostly because they absolutely love it.

It may sound like a nightmare, conjuring up images of smashed eggs, a kitchen covered in flour dust and an inedible result, but try it - you might be pleasantly surprised.

Obviously with twins you'll need to have two of some things to make life easier. We've always managed with one large mixing bowl, but two aprons (very popular) two wooden spoons, rolling pins and any of the real hands-on items are essential if you want to avoid arguments. Taking turns at mixing is negotiation enough.

Having been keen bakers for at least two years, my 3½ year old girls are now a pretty good team: one will cut the shapes for the jam tarts, the other will spoon in the jam. We're at a stage where I could actually leave them with two balls of gingerbread dough and come back to find two baking trays of biscuits ready for the oven. Odd shapes, yes, but perfectly acceptable, and even delicious. And they love the washing up, although I find a bowl of water on a low table is far easier and less hazardous than the scramble for a turn on the taps.

For younger children, the key is to keep it simple. If it's a complicated recipe, you're asking for trouble.

Firm favourites with us are flapjacks, cornflake/rice krispie cakes and fairy cakes, all of which follow the "chuck it all in and mix" method. Also, whatever you say, they will want to eat the raw mixture, so keep baking for an after-meals activity so you don't get worried about them filling up before lunch/dinner. If you don't want them to have raw eggs, add the eggs last and give a quick mix before spooning into cake cases or tins.

"What do you mean we can't eat it now!"



For older children, you can be more ambitious. My son is almost 7 and still enjoys the rare one-to-one-ness of baking with mum. Obviously I use it as a sneaky reading and mathematics exercise....

Happy baking!

Useful books

Kids' First Cook Book (Dorling Kindersley, 1999)

The Walker Book of Children's Cookery by Roz Denny and Caroline Waldegrave (Walker Books, 1993)

Roald Dahl's Revolting Recipes series (Random House, 2001)

Favourite "Chuck It All In and Mix" Recipes

Flapjacks

300g rolled oats, 200g melted margarine, 200g demerara sugar, 2 tbsp golden syrup, 100g self-raising flour, 1 egg and any of the following: ½ jar jam, dried fruit, nuts/seeds, chocolate chips, etc.

Bake in a greased tray at Gas Mark 3/160°C/325°F for 45 minutes.

Fairy Cakes (makes 12)

100g self-raising flour, 100g soft margarine, 100g caster sugar, 2 eggs, plus cherries, sultanas, etc if you like.

Spoon into cases and bake at Gas Mark 4/180°C/350°F for 20 to 25 minutes. Cool and ice.

Cornflake/Rice Krispie Cakes (makes 12)

100g cornflakes/rice krispies, 100g melted chocolate.

Spoon into cases and refrigerate.

Alternative Cornflake/Rice Krispie Cakes

Add broken biscuits, chopped dried fruit, marshmallows, etc.

Spoon onto a sheet of greaseproof paper in a long line, roll up, refrigerate and cut into slices.

Double Chocolate Cookies (far too yummy to share with the kids!)

125g caster sugar, 125g soft butter/margarine, 150g plain flour, ½ tsp baking powder, 125g porridge oats, 1 tsp vanilla essence, 125g white chocolate chunks, 125g plain chocolate chunks, 1 egg.

Place dessertspoonfuls on a greased baking tray and flatten slightly. Leave space for spreading. Bake at Gas Mark 4/180°C/350°F for 12-15 minutes.

Money Matters



The arrival of twins almost always has a big impact on our pockets. If we go back to work to help the family finances it can be a bit of a shock to find that most of our hard earned cash goes straight on childcare! We may decide to postpone our return to work for a year or two but again we are faced with the challenge of living on one income. So, what can we do to stretch the budget?

Equipment

- Don't buy any equipment, clothes or toys until you've been to one of our 6 monthly Nearly New Sales.
- You get some real bargains and can literally save hundreds of pounds by buying pushchairs, cots and other costly items second hand.
- Buy online eg. Kiddicare.com, ebay.
- Borrow items you may only use for a short time (eg. Moses basket)
- Use toy libraries to provide a good supply of age appropriate stimulating toys. (Ask your health visitor where your nearest one is)

Food

- Plan the weeks menus and only buy what you need.
- Big supermarkets do economy ranges, try them.
- Make the most of BOGOF offers.
- Good food needn't be expensive or take ages to prepare. (Look out for ideas in the next issue)
- If you shop regularly at a particular store, collect their reward points.

Going Out

- When you go out always take drinks for the children. Nobody will complain if you go to a café and the children have their own beakers.
- If you're out for the day make a couple of sandwiches for each member of the family and take drinks. You can always supplement your basic picnic with bought snacks.
- When eating out with young children order one meal and share it. (They rarely eat a whole meal anyway!)
- For expensive attractions look out for special offers. (We went to Lego Land a week before the twins 3rd birthday so they were free and with a voucher from a milk carton which allowed a free child for every paying adult.)
- There are lots of things to do in and around London that are absolutely free so make the most of them. Find out what's on from libraries, local papers and websites.

Shopping

- Ask for reductions. It's amazing what reductions you can get if you ask nicely!
- Join the nappy/baby clubs at supermarkets to get extra reward points and money off vouchers.
- If you have a girl and a boy, have some unisex clothes that can be shared.
- Buy in bulk if you have space especially when there are BOGOF offers.
- Medicines can be very expensive. Avoid well known brands and ask the pharmacist what the cheaper equivalent is.
- You can often find well known brands of baby products much cheaper at Poundstretcher shops.

Christmas/Birthday Presents

- Start saving for Christmas now. (From the beginning of September I put about £10 a week into a money box—it certainly helps.)
- Make pacts with relatives and friends about who to buy for (eg. just the children), how much to spend (eg. £5) With good friends, arrange an evening out together instead of buying presents.
- Buy presents whenever you see something suitable throughout the year, especially during sales because when you do need to buy something you can never find just the right thing.
- Buy children’s presents in the sales or when they are on special offer. It’s amazing how many birthday parties the children are invited to, especially when they start school.
- Although it’s important for young children to have toys to stimulate their development, they do not notice if they only have a watering can and balloon to unwrap.
- When asked by family and friends what they should buy the children, be practical. The grandparents gave us the money for 6 months supply of nappies for each birthday and Christmas until the children were two years old.

General

- Don’t go shopping unless you have something you need to buy—you’ll end up spending money on impulse purchases.
- It’s amazing how much money disappears on small things eg. magazine, coffee, sweets for the kids. Set yourself a weekly “pocket money” budget and stick to it rigidly!
- Sort out your cupboards and wardrobes and sell anything you don’t need/want on ebay or at a car boot sale.
- For all your children’s outgrown clothes, toys and equipment, bring them to the next

nearly new sale!

THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS 12th January 2007. PLEASE SEND ARTICLES, ETC TO RUTH BUTLER (e-mail: ruth_butler@btinternet.com)



In the next newsletter our top tips will be

How to feed the children well without spending too much time or money.

Please send me your suggestions by 12th January 2007.

What goes down well with your kids?

Ruth Butler
(e-mail: ruth_butler@btinternet.com)



The winter season not only brings the expectation of frosty mornings and Christmas parties. It also brings the inevitable minor illnesses that seem to go on for ever! We're grateful to Ben Whalley for this article which will help us when we face that bemusing array of preparations available at the chemist counter.

Coughs and Colds – Some Practical Advice

Whilst typically self-limiting, the frequency with which colds occur in kids, especially the under-3s, means that knowing some handy tips to make your child's life a bit more bearable when they are ill will not only speed up their recovery but also leave you a slightly less unhappy bunny!

The majority of colds resolve themselves and just require treatment for the symptoms, not the cause. However, the usual advice about very high temperatures, rashes etc. still applies and so **the following advice in no way replaces consulting your pharmacist/NHS Direct/GP** if you are concerned.

No doses are given since you should always read the label and determine the appropriate dose for your child's age/size/weight. If you are in any doubt, consult your pharmacist – remember, they're at the end of the phone as well as being stuck in a cupboard at the back of the chemist's shop. Oh, and you can call at any time during opening hours – not just between 8:30 and 9:00 in the morning!

Painkillers

Paracetamol

Suspension; Pain killer, fever reducer, anti-inflammatory

Typically comes in 2/3 month+ (120mg/5ml) and 6 years+ (250mg/5ml) strengths. The most common brand is Calpol although it is always worth asking your pharmacist if he/she has a generic (unbranded/own brand) version since they are frequently pounds cheaper and contain the same amount of the same active ingredient.

In addition to being useful for cold symptoms, paracetamol is also effective in reducing the slight fever produced after vaccinations (you are taking your responsibility to your child and the rest of the population seriously and having them vaccinated, aren't you?). The nurse/GP giving the vaccination will be able to advise you on the correct dose if the child is under 3 months.

When your children are still very young, remember to buy an oral syringe to dose them with as they may struggle with a spoon. It's also a lot easier to measure the right amount of medicine with a syringe than a spoon! They're cheap, can be re-used and give you a bit more confidence that you've actually given the right amount – especially when they spit out the first bit you give them – at least you know how much is left in the syringe!

A note on suppositories

Whilst we in the UK often balk at the prospect of suppositories, they are often the preferred form for many medicines on the continent and do have a number of advantages in specific situations.

The majority of children's medicines that are taken by mouth tend to taste sickly and sweet even if they are ostensibly 'sugar free'. This can be less than useful when one of your sick child's symptoms is nausea/vomiting as they'll throw up the medicine you gave them five minutes previously – usually all over you or the sofa. Moreover, if they throw it all up within minutes of administration, you'll have no idea how much of the medicine is still in their stomach and how much is now liberally splattered all over the dog! Obviously one can't necessarily risk a second dose for fear of overdosing which is where the sense behind using a suppository becomes plain.

Clearly, having a pack of paracetamol suppositories can be a godsend – after all, a minute of getting the suppository inserted has got to be better than the front room still stinking of vomit for a day or two after you’ve cleaned up! The dog will be happier too.

You’ll rarely find them sitting on the counter in the chemist’s but most will keep the various strengths for different ages and will be happy to advise you on the appropriate choice.

A couple of things worth mentioning are:

- Roll the suppository between your palms for a few seconds before unwrapping it. This warms it up a bit and also melts a little of the waxy material that makes it up, making it easier and more comfortable to administer.
- For goodness sake, take the wrapper off before inserting (yes, this happens all too often).

Ibuprofen

Suspension; Painkiller/fever reducer/anti-inflammatory

Ibuprofen (Nurofen for Children, Calprofen etc.) can be a useful adjunct or substitute for paracetamol. You may find that it is more effective in some situations than paracetamol, although this can be a trial and error process – you’ll have to see which one your child responds better to. As with paracetamol, the same advice about generics applies.

One point worth noting about ibuprofen is that it may irritate the stomach and, whilst this isn’t usually a big worry for the short-term, does prevent it being a first choice when the illness symptoms you are treating also have a sickness/nausea aspect to them.

Ibuprofen also has a useful place as an add-on treatment to paracetamol in younger children who suffer sudden, high ‘spikes’ in temperature with cough/cold infections. With younger ones (under 3s), if their temperature rises too high, too fast, there is a risk that it may cause a febrile convulsion. This should not be confused with epilepsy *per se*, although the symptoms are similar. In children prone to temperature spikes, it can be useful to give both paracetamol and ibuprofen. **However, you should consult your pharmacist/GP before doing this to ensure that the additional medication is both safe for your child and not cover up a more serious illness.**

Finally, ibuprofen does represent a risk to asthmatics, triggering asthma attacks in a susceptible percentage of asthmatics.

Decongestants

Snotty noses (*aka ‘The Green Elevens’*) are inevitable and rarely a major worry but some of the consequences can be uncomfortable and irritating, especially for younger ones. Soreness of the upper lip can be pretty miserable so a blob of Sudocrem can really help as it not only soothes the sore area but acts as a barrier to stop the streaming flood of mucus from making the soreness worse. Vaseline is a useful alternative, especially if you are going out and don’t want your little angel to look like the diminutive, albino reincarnation of a notorious fascist dictator. That said, being transparent, it’s not always obvious when it’s been wiped off – something that isn’t a problem with Sudocrem.

Blocked noses can be very unpleasant for babies (and their parents!), especially as there aren’t really any useful tablet/liquid decongestants for very young ones. One way of helping matters is to dilute the mucus which has the effect of making it runnier and, although the river of snot increases, it’s definitely a case of ‘better out than in’. There are a couple of options available to you on the snot dilution front.

Firstly there are sterile saline nasal drops. A good choice as they are very safe – it’s just a weak salt solution made up to a strength that matches the natural salt levels in our bodies. The only drawback is that it isn’t always the nicest thing to have stuck up your nose – particularly when you are feeling ill, bunged up and pretty damn grumpy anyway. If the child has yet to be weaned, it is often best to give the drops just before a feed as this not only helps to clear the airways at a crucial time (i.e. when they need to do some nose breathing) but the action of breathing through the nose when feeding helps get the drops further up the nasal passages, making the treatment more effective.

Secondly, for those whose child has now become adept at hitting a home run with the nasal drops bottle as soon as you approach with it, inhaling steam can be a useful alternative. Clearly giving them a towel to put over their head and a big bowl of boiling water is a Bad Thing™, so we turn to two alternative ways of getting steam into your gromit. The first, which is essentially a mini-nebuliser (makes a fine mist of water droplets), involves an outlay of hard cash and so is best discussed with your pharmacist to help you choose the right one. The second is free (hooray!) and dead easy, assuming you have a bathroom with a shower. Gather up the sickly whinger and a selection of favourite books/stories and head for the bathroom. Turn on the shower to as hot as possible (no, neither you nor the plague-ridden one are going to get under it), close the door and the bathroom will start to steam up. Sit there – the toilet is useful for this part – and read, chat, persuade him/her to stay in there as long as possible. Bingo! Room-sized steam inhaler!

Inhaled decongestants (e.g. Karvol, Menthol & Eucalyptus etc.) can be useful – especially with slightly older children – but be wary of using these with particularly young children as the active ingredients can irritate little nasal passages. Irritation causes swelling, swelling causes more congestion, matters just get worse. If they do find it beneficial, put some Karvol (or whatever) on a tissue and pin it, out of reach, near their cot/bed. This will minimise any irritation but still provide some relief.

Cough Mixtures

By and large, if they've got a cold, the cough will pretty soon follow, like a pair of unwelcome relatives arriving for Christmas. There are a few small tips that may help you get the most out of the cough treatments available:

1. Most cough medicines for very young children don't exert any useful effect once they have passed the throat and are in the stomach. Consequently, you can increase the effect of the cough mixture (without increasing the dose) by mixing it with a water-based drink of the child's choice. This dilutes the medicine but it means that it spends longer going past their throat and so extends the effect.
2. Avoid giving 'chesty cough' mixtures before bedtime: these do not stop the cough but instead slightly irritate the throat to stimulate the cough and so dislodge and shift the mucus. When the child is lying down they are, for various reasons, more likely to cough so giving something to make them cough more (and so keep them and you awake) is not the most sensible choice unless you're a masochist.

Other Useful Tips

It can be rather concerning when your child is running a high fever, even after having established (via your pharmacist/GP/NHS Direct) that it is just a self-limiting response to a minor infection and not something more serious (e.g. meningitis). Consequently, there are a few useful tips that, in addition to the anti-pyretics ('fever reducers') above, can help make your child more comfortable.

Manage the medication doses sensibly.

In the case of simple colds, there is little logic in not giving a medicine 'until he/she needs it'. If the directions, for example, say 'four times daily' then plan ahead so that you don't dose irregularly. Sachets of your anti-pyretic of choice can be handy if you are likely to be out and about (e.g. school run), preventing your child from having to wait until you get home if they are due another dose.

Fans, wet flannels, open windows

It may seem obvious but it's surprising how many people don't do the obvious and cool their feverish child down with a fan, flannel etc. The other bonus with a wet flannel is that it gives the grumpy little so-and-so something to do and feel important about whilst sitting on the sofa OD-ing on CBeebies. Don't forget that, at bedtime, they're going to have a duvet on them so don't overdo the vests, pyjamas etc. Also, natural fibres (cotton etc.) are far more pleasant on the skin than synthetics when feverish.

Ben Whalley

(Registered Pharmacist)

All Change At The Nearly New Sale

Our Spring sale will be on **Saturday 10th March**

We have decided to return to a venue that we have used in the past because it is more suitable. So our next sale will be at:

**All Saints Church Crypt
Rosendale Road
West Dulwich SE21**



One of the advantages of this site is that we'll be able to set up a café area so if you don't want to buy, just come and meet friends for coffee and cake.

If you'd be able to help serve at the café please let Charlotte know.

Some club members have offered to donate items for sale to the Twins Club. If you would like to do this, please price each item as usual but label it "Twins Club". Also, there are always items that lose their labels. If we are unable to identify who is selling the item, we will donate it to the Twins Club.

We have also changed the sellers instructions so please read them. (See the next newsletter)

Can You Help?

We have two Nearly New sales each year and currently Steph and Charlotte organise it and delegate the jobs. They would like one or two people to join them with the view to handing over the responsibilities next year.

Ideally one of these people should be happy to look after the financial side of the sale.

What are the perks? Apart from joining the great team that keep the Twins Club going, the Sales organisers do not pay any commission to the club when they sell.

Please contact Ruth Butler or Charlotte Becket for more details.

THE DULWICH AND DISTRICT TWINS CLUB



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL

Membership is due for renewal in August each year. The cost of annual membership is £12.00 or charged at £1 per month remaining for those joining the club during the year (free of charge to single parents and those on benefits).

If you would like to join / renew your membership, please return this form with a cheque made payable to "Dulwich and District Twins Club" to The Membership Secretary, Jane Pepperall, 28 Danecroft Road, Herne Hill, SE24 9NZ

PARENTS NAMES

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

CHILD'S NAME

DATE OF BIRTH / EDD

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DATE

SIGNED

For those with new twins, please tick if you are interested in being put in touch with a local family with slightly older twins for informal support

For all new members, please tick if you are interested in being put in touch with another family with twins of a similar age