

## **Multiple pregnancy needs special care**

It is estimated that about one in 80 pregnancies occurring in Hong Kong is a multiple pregnancy. The number of women having twins or triplets has increased over the years due to assisted reproductive technology.

Diagnosis of multiple pregnancy can be made at an early stage of pregnancy using the ultrasound technique. Once diagnosed as having more than one foetus, the mother needs to be monitored closely. This is because women carrying more than one foetus have a greater risk of developing complications than women carrying only one foetus. The chances of babies having to be delivered with the help of Caesarean section are also greater.

The possibility of pregnancy-induced hypertension and anemia occurring is also higher. The dangers associated with multiple pregnancy include intrauterine growth restriction, miscarriage, stillbirth, neonatal birth, preterm delivery, twin-twin transfusion syndrome (TTTS) and other congenital abnormalities.

Nowadays, 2D and 3D ultrasound examinations are widely used to monitor foetal growth and to assess foetal structure. The newly-developed 3D/ 4D ultrasound techniques enable doctors to make a more precise diagnosis of different congenital abnormalities at an early stage of pregnancy.

Since multiple pregnancy have a higher risk of complications, special care is needed. Women carrying more than one foetus should take more rest and should visit a doctor for antenatal checks more often. They should also increase their intake of calories, proteins and other nutrients which are good for the foetus and which also reduces their risk of contracting anemia.