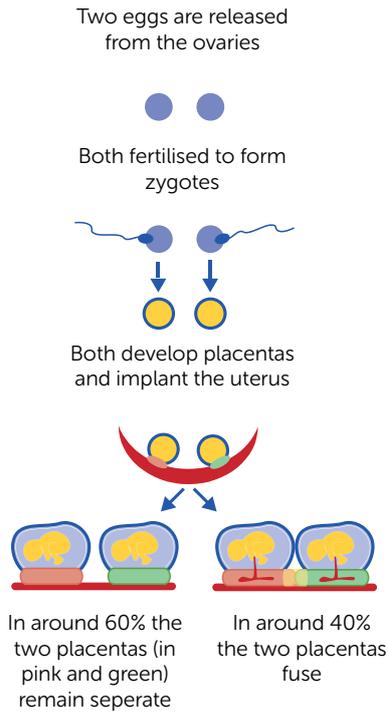


# 'Fraternal' or 'Identical' twins?

## Zygoty and Placentas



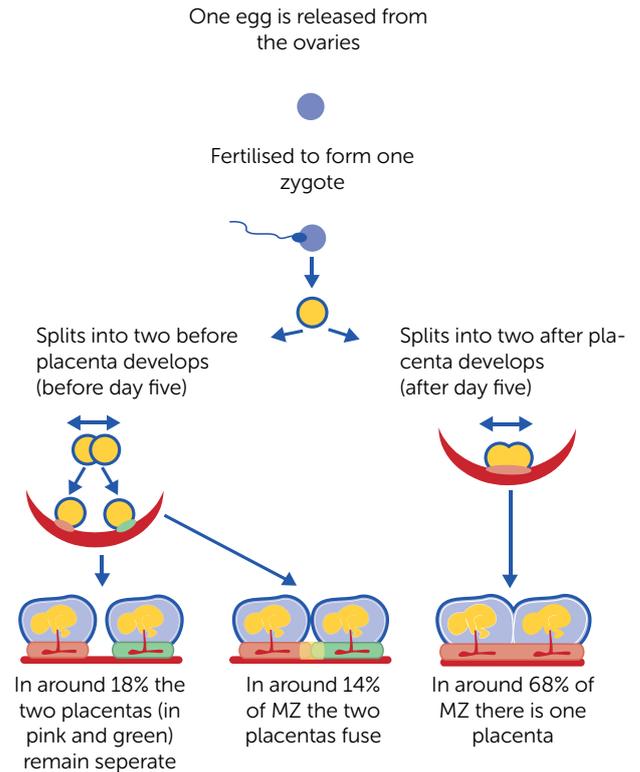
### 'Fraternal', 'Non-identical' or Dizygotic (DZ) twins



- Occurs when two separate eggs are released from a woman's ovaries and each is fertilised by two individual sperm cells.
- Both twins develop their own placentas and implant in the uterus, so are dichorionic (two placentas).
- In 40 percent, the placentas grow together and fuse (due to limited space). A fused placenta can make twins appear identical (when they are non-identical).

**Dizygotic twins are dichorionic.**

### 'Identical' or Monozygotic (MZ) twins



- Occurs when one egg is released and fertilised by a single sperm cell. This then splits in two, to form two 'identical' fertilised eggs.
- In about 1/3 of MZ twins, the split happens before the placenta has started to form so each twin develops their own placenta (dichorionic twins). In 14 percent of MZ twins, the two placentas fuse.
- In about 2/3 of MZ twins, the split takes place after the placenta has formed. These twins share one placenta so are monochorionic.

**Monozygotic twins can be monochorionic or dichorionic, depending on when the split occurs.**

### WHEN SHOULD YOU CONSIDER ZYGOSITY TESTING?

If twins are the same sex and each had a placenta or if there is doubt about the type of placenta, then they could be monozygotic (identical) or dizygotic (fraternal).

Genetic (zygoty) testing is usually done by collecting a cheek swab with a mailed kit.

To learn more & for discounted genetic testing go to [www.twins.org.au](http://www.twins.org.au) or freecall 1800-037-021.