

Four Personal Stories from Parents of Triplets

Parents of triplets share their personal experiences below. You should also read Tamba's [Triplets, Quads or More! factsheet](#) and [FAQs](#) that we produced along with these personal stories.

Kate Pelazza - Mum to triplets (two boys and one girl)

17th January 2011 and a phone call between myself and my mum following my first scan went a little like this: "Mum, we're pregnant and there's not just one". "Twins?!!" she asked. To which I replied, "There's not just two." My Mum's response summed up my pregnancy and those early years: "What



can you get that's more than two?" Welcome to the world of triplets.

Discovering I was pregnant with three babies was a moment I'll never forget; I was shocked, but absolutely thrilled. Once we'd had our 12-week scan and been informed of the risks, we tried as best as we could to stay positive and try to enjoy our very special pregnancy. From twelve weeks onwards I had fortnightly scans at a hospital which was able to deliver specialist care in a high risk pregnancy.

I also had an existing medical condition which required further monitoring and placed me at a

potentially greater risk of complications. Despite this, I enjoyed a relatively uneventful pregnancy.

At around 20 weeks I was given iron tablets as I was found to be slightly anaemic and from approximately 26 weeks, I started to develop Braxton Hicks Contractions. At 24 weeks I was signed off from work, kicking and screaming, as a primary school teacher. I had started to develop oedema (fluid retention in the body) and standing for the majority of the day along with an hour's commute into London, became near impossible.

Regardless, I was very determined to try and continue everyday activities, for example, shopping and walking through town throughout my last two months of pregnancy. This I managed until I reached about 32 weeks. At that point, the pressure of my triplets and the oedema became too great and aside, from hospital appointments, I spent the last two weeks at home. At 34 weeks + 4 days my boy-boy-girl trio were born weighing 2.32kg, 1.4kg and 1.98kg.

I found my planned C-section extremely anxious. I wish I'd felt more relaxed as I struggle to remember parts of it. Including myself and my husband, there were 21 people in the theatre that morning. The babies were delivered within one minute of each other. Two cried straight away, one didn't. He was our smallest and the one that would need help following delivery.

After they were cleaned and checked, our biggest boy and our little girl were wrapped up and shown to us. Our



littlest, weighing 1.4kg, was taken to the Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU) straight away. I was very fortunate to have two of my babies with me straight away, but I was poorly and missed the first feeds and the first nappy changes. That evening I was finally transferred to the postnatal ward with two of my trio. I still hadn't met my little Matteo.

Twenty-four hours after giving birth I got to meet my other son in SCBU. He had required seven hours of Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) and was being tube fed. He couldn't regulate his body temperature, was jaundiced, had a heart murmur and had anaemia of prematurity. However, we were lucky. I remember the consultant telling us, "There's nothing wrong with him, he's just tiny," and most of these issues rectified themselves by the time he was a month old (he needed an iron supplement for a little while after coming home).

My other two were struggling to feed and were taking about 7mls in one and half hours. They both lost about 12% of their body weight and so within a few days they had nasogastric tubes inserted

and we tube-fed them on the ward. The medical staff removed the tubes after 24 hours explaining that they didn't want the babies to get used to them and lose their fight to feed. My breast milk never came and so we formula-fed our trio, although we happily consented to donor breast milk for our son in SCBU.

As my two with me weren't ready to be discharged, but were with me on the ward, I felt I was in some sort of limbo. I wasn't allowed home until they were. I began to struggle to meet their needs with regards feeding and see my son who was a couple floors up in the SCBU.

Eventually, after about a week, I was transferred with my two babies to the family unit upstairs. This was a facility with two bedrooms reserved for parents who had babies in SCBU. It meant I was close to my littlest and could try and meet his needs and those of his brother and sister.

These first two weeks were emotionally and physically exhausting and one of the hardest times I've experienced to date.

Myself and two of my babies were finally discharged after two weeks. My other son was transferred to our local hospital's SCBU two days later and remained there for a further two weeks.

We were all reunited when our babies turned 1 month old.

Theresa McDonald Hindle - Mum to triplet boys

I have three boys - two identical (monochorionic) and one non-identical.

I had a heavy bleed at six weeks and went for blood tests to see if I was still pregnant. I was (!) and I was told it could be twins but I'd have to wait until eight weeks for a scan.

I started reading up on twin pregnancies and only glanced at information on higher order multiples never thinking that it would happen to me! Needless to say we were very shocked when the sonographer found three little heart-beats.

We were carefully monitored by the consultant at our local hospital. Our scan frequency slowly increased, and by week

24 I was being scanned every other or every day. Luckily, I had decided to stop working at 24 weeks and spent all my time eating or sleeping.

It became apparent that our smallest was getting intermittent blood flow so we had to deliver early. I had steroid injections to help the babies' lungs mature and we eventually made it to 30 weeks + 4 days!



The boys were born weighing 2lb 8oz, 3lb 2oz and 3lb 4oz. They all breathed with just a little help for a few days (CPAP) and were generally healthy.

They were in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for less than two weeks and moved on to SCBU. There were a few setbacks with typical prem issues around coordinating breathing and swallowing, but they progressed well and we went home the week of their due date.

NICU and SCBU can be stressful but we always felt that the staff were providing the best possible care. We asked lots of questions and always felt in the loop with what was going on.

Going home was BIG! We were so excited but scared to death as well. We brought all three home together and quickly tried to establish a routine of feeding and sleeping. We were on a three and half to four hour schedule but with feeds taking up to two hours at a time, there was not much time to rest before the next feed was due. I was trying to breastfeed but two of the three weren't taking to it so I was also expressing between feeds.

At night one of us slept on a single bed in the boys' room while the other slept in our bedroom. We were lucky in that my husband was on gardening leave so he was at home full-time with me.

We don't have family nearby so we eventually hired a maternity nurse to help us out so that we could get a bit of a

break. This was the best decision, although at the time we thought it was a bit of an expensive solution. The maternity nurse not only gave us a break, but she taught us the tricks of the trade and how to simplify our routine.

As the boys grew, and their needs changed, she showed us how to adjust our schedule to accommodate them. I would highly recommend that you request friends and family who want to give you gifts to give you money towards a maternity nurse instead. We got loads of lovely clothes that the boys never wore. The money would have been put to good use paying for the help we desperately needed.

For me, on my journey as a triplet mum, I found the first six months were the hardest. My advice is to enlist as much help as you can. I found that drawing up a list of jobs that needed doing and getting a rota of people to help out with feeds, shopping, making meals... anything that needed doing, really helped me. My priority was to feed my babies and get plenty of food and rest for myself. I also found it important to get out. Taking the babies for a walk during one of their nap times and going to baby groups really helped me feel less isolated. It's amazing how fresh air, a bit of exercise and a chat can energise an exhausted body.

Babies needs change as they grow. I found that I needed to be flexible and learn to go with it, as when I resisted it this resulted in frustration.

Above all be proud of your accomplishments - having triplets or more is NOT easy. It's a great accomplishment that only a select group of parents get to achieve. Be kind to yourself and your partner. Praise and thank each other for the small things every day no matter how crabby and tired you feel.

Susan - Mum to triplet girls

Seeing the sonographer hold up three fingers is an image I will never forget. Her name and face escape me, but that's only fair - I had just heard life changing news! My husband and I had only been married for 7 weeks when we found out I was

expecting triplets. Even a strong family history of twins could not have prepared us for this news.

I recall calling my husband (I was alone for the first scan) to ask if we could meet for lunch. He feared the worst despite my reassurances that I was fine, but I needed to see him. How could I keep that kind of information to myself for six whole hours? We sat in stunned silence trying to digest the news and our lunch with the same levels of disbelief and wonder.

The thoughts racing through my husbands mind were all the practical things like...

- How are we going to cope?
- Will we need a bigger house?
- Will we need a bigger car?
- Will we need different jobs to fund it all?
- Who will help us? (We don't have family locally)

My thoughts included...

- I only have two hands, how am I going to hold all of them at once?
- What if they all cry at the same time?
- How am I going to breast-feed them?
- How will I get through the pregnancy in one piece?
- Will I ever sleep again?? (I am a self confessed selfish sleeper!)



Our healthy babies arrived safely by planned C-Section at 32 weeks + 4 days (every day mattered to me).

We were advised to be prepared for our babies to be in NICU until their full term due date and we went on a tour of the neonatal unit a few weeks before hand so we could understand what to expect.

I would recommend this as it was very helpful. Knowing that the chances our babies may have to spend time in this unit was reassuring for us as we knew we

would have 24-hour expert care for our precious girls. This time also allowed us to adjust to the very demanding feeding and care time schedules.

Care time in hospital involved nappy changes, feeding, winding, changing again if necessary and skin to skin care. These will always be some of my most precious memories of the very early days despite spending up to twelve hours at the hospital everyday for weeks.

I managed to breast-feed all of my babies (not exclusively) and I expressed often to build supply. The expressing whilst they were in hospital worked much better than when we all got home. Having the nurses on hand to assist allowed for real care-time and enabled me to focus on feeding.

We were discharged from hospital after 21 days. When at home, there were so many other things to do and to keep all of us fed (I am not talking about housework or laundry or even getting out of the house). I managed three and a half months of breast-feeding and expressing.

We decided that my husband would take his paternity leave when we were discharged from hospital rather than immediately after the birth (plenty of nurses on hand to assist in hospital whereas we had no one to help at home). This worked really well for us.

Getting into a routine worked for us and three years later, looking back, most of it has been a blur - but so rewarding! Writing this has brought back many memories of the early days and looking at photographs has filled my heart yet again.

I wish you all the best. It is the most incredible journey!

Charlotte Bird - Mum to triplet girls (and two older children)

Finding out I was expecting not just one baby but three was, as you would expect, one heck of a shock! I can't repeat what I blurted out to the sonographer (who was herself equally as shocked) for risk of



offence, but you can imagine!

The pregnancy was hard - really hard - I was so tired! I managed to carry my triplet girls to 30 weeks + 4 days, so when they were born they were the tiniest babies I had ever seen, weighing between 3 and 4lb, and they were all rushed to SCBU where they spent seven weeks until they were strong enough to come home, weighing just 6lb!

You need to get super-organised. Think ahead in every aspect of life. On a daily basis get used to getting clothes and nappies laid out the night before and breakfast prepped as much as possible - especially if you have to be out of the house by a certain time in the morning.

Being able to walk downstairs and have everything waiting really makes a huge difference, especially if you have had a rough night. Also, look out for reduced items in at sale times when you are shopping. If you see three winter coats for next year with 70% off, get them now and put them away! You'll be glad twelve months later that you haven't got to spend £90 on winter coats! This goes for anything - clothes, bedding, toys, etc.

Most importantly though, embrace being 'parents of higher order multiples'! You will be blessed with children who are never lonely and will be the recipient of unending love and cuddles. TRIPLETS ROCK!

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