

Linda's story

I had a miscarriage in 1998 when I was 19 and was diagnosed with polycystic ovarian syndrome in 2000. I took Clomid in 2001 for six months and my son was born in December 2002. I wanted to complete my family so after 3 years of trying to conceive naturally, I was referred back to the fertility clinic. I was told that IUI was the first route to try.

My experience of multiple pregnancy

My second stimulated IUI treatment was successful. I was about 6 weeks pregnant when I had a massive bleed. I thought I was having another miscarriage so I went into A&E.

I was given a scan and the doctor told me that the pregnancy was OK and that she could see 3 heartbeats. I didn't feel particularly shocked at the time because I was so relieved not to be having a miscarriage. I continued to bleed for a further week and was told that I had lost one of the babies.

However, at my next scan 3 heartbeats were detected and that was when I first felt the shock of being pregnant with triplets. I didn't know what to say to my husband (he hadn't come with me for that particular scan) – we just couldn't believe it!

The pregnancy progressed normally, but I was a nervous wreck the whole way through. Things started to get hard for me at about 17 weeks when I began to suffer with symphysis pubis dysfunction (pain and inflammation of the joint where the two halves of the pelvic bones meet at the front). The pain was unbearable: it took me ages to do the simplest of tasks.

At around 26 weeks the babies had really started to hurt me, one of them was right under my ribs and I found it difficult to find a comfortable position whether standing, sitting or lying down. I suffered from lack of sleep as I couldn't get comfortable in bed.

My experience of multiple birth

My consultant decided that at 33 weeks I would have a C-section to deliver the babies. I went into hospital at 8.30am for my C-section. Due to an emergency delivery, I had to wait until 12pm before it was my turn to go to the operating theatre. The thought of walking down the corridor and into the operating room terrified me – I was scared for the babies and I was worried about what would happen to me (my previous labour was a natural delivery).

It was explained what would happen to me and I was given an epidural. At 12.39pm my first daughter was delivered, weighing 4lb 7oz then in the same minute my second daughter was born, weighing 3lb 12oz. At 12.43 my third daughter was born, weighing 4lb 6oz. They were rushed off to the Special Care Baby Unit and I was stitched up.

I found the whole process quite distressing – with a normal singleton C-section, you get to see your baby and have a cuddle, but I didn't get to see my daughters until 9pm that evening and even then I could only look at them through the incubators. I found it extremely difficult not being with them and not able to cuddle them.

After 3 weeks they were allowed home.

Caring for triplets

The first few weeks at home with the girls are all a bit of a blur to me now – it seemed that all I was doing was feeding the babies and trying to catch some sleep whenever I had the chance. I would only get two and a half hours between feeding the last one and starting again on the first one.

Things settled down when the girls were about 12 weeks old and they started sleeping for 10 hours at night. They sleep all night now, which is much easier, but they are awake for most of the day. I find it hard to get out with the girls – my pram won't go through many doors to shops, etc, so I can't just nip to the shop if I run out of milk – I have to wait until someone is home so that I can pop out.

If I do manage to get out with the three of them, people stop me all the time. Some people are really nice but some can be a bit rude.

The financial side of having triplets is crippling. I spend at least £50 per week on nappies, wet wipes and milk, not including food and clothing.

The positives!

I absolutely adore my children and if given the chance all over again, I would not have changed a thing. Yes, having three babies is hard work, but the reward is three times greater.

When I walk into their bedroom in the morning, I get three huge smiles from my babies, who can't wait to be cuddled. I feel like the most loved mummy in the world.