'I couldn't stop crying': a Newcastle mum's battle after twins

By Damon Cronshaw
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After Laura Wilson had twins Jasper and Chloé, she went through a tough time.

She was diagnosed with postnatal depression, after physical troubles affected her mental health.

Ms Wilson, of Fletcher, shared her story to mark Perinatal Mental Health Week.

In the first month after her babies were born, she spent 25 days in hospital.

"I had five different hospital visits, four surgeries and countless drips," she said.

She had a caesarean and Jasper had health issues with his kidneys.

"Then I had some complications with an infection in the caesarean wound," she said.

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Ms Wilson found it hard dealing with an infection, while "trying to work out how to look after two babies".

She was also diagnosed with acute pancreatitis.

"It can be very overwhelming pain," she said.

"I was having that from the last week that I was pregnant."

This combination of challenges led her to develop "quite serious mental health issues".

"I couldn't stop crying," she said.

"I got the baby blues hard and they lasted quite a long time."

The Australian Multiple Birth Association did a survey last year of more than 1200 parents of multiple children, such as twins or triplets.

The survey found 70 per cent of these parents experienced mental health challenges in their babies' first two years.

Ms Wilson, who is a director of the association, said "multiple birth parents are five times more likely to experience postnatal depression than mums with single babies".

"We should include multiple birth families in the conversation about mental health," she said.

While in hospital, Ms Wilson felt isolated.

"Hospitals aren't cheery places. My mental health was quickly deteriorating," she said.

"Being in hospital, I just didn't get a chance to work out what I was doing in terms of looking after my babies."

She felt lucky that a psychologist was available to see her in hospital.

"She was quick to say you're having a tough time, but we'll get you through it," she said.

Ms Wilson said the psychologist "gave me great advice about making time to look after myself".

She advised her to "make time for friends and see them at least once a week".

Ms Wilson had her twins in Brisbane, but moved to Newcastle when they were four months old.

She didn't know anyone in the area, so she joined the Australian Multiple Birth Association.

It has been running in Newcastle for almost 60 years.

She found the association to be exactly what she needed.

"It's a fantastic community," she said.

"One of the first things I did was go to a new mum's lunch, where all the mums had twins or triplets.



"The volunteers helped us order food, brought us drinks and held our babies."

Jasper and Chloé are now aged four.

"It's been chaotic. Every milestone is double the size," Ms Wilson said, with a laugh.

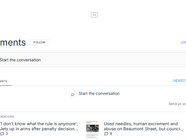
"But I feel so lucky we have twins. They're incredible kids and good at sharing.

"I feel like I'm on a very special parenting journey."

She and fiancé Mitchell Stewart make sure they take time out for themselves.

"The kids have sleepovers at grandma's often. I'm lucky I have a good bunch of friends here to catch up with, particularly twin mums," she said.

She and Jasper have recovered from their health challenges.



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