



## Our Connections are made for life

Babies are born learning, making the first three years the most critical for early brain development. This is when positive foundations are set in the brain for wiring-up lifetime experiences and learning self-regulation. Our minds determine our thoughts, behaviours and actions. We all help a baby's brain grow when we choose to build secure attachment relationships based on love, trust and respect.

In-home childcare, work & training

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Multiple birth subsidies may apply



## health check

### Multiple babies and postnatal depression

Article reprinted from [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Caring for two or more babies is hard work. For some women, the extra pressure of coping with more than one baby can lead to postnatal depression (PND). This doesn't mean that you'll definitely get depressed after having your babies, but there are good reasons why mothers of multiple births can be more at risk.

#### What can cause PND?

The Twins and Multiple Births Association (Tamba) identifies some of the most common causes of postnatal depression (PND) in parents of multiple babies:

- Caring for two babies is hard. You constantly have to split your time and attention between them, and cannot give them the same type of care you would a single baby. This is perfectly natural and coping with two or more babies takes some time to get used to.
- A lack of sleep is more likely to affect mothers of multiple babies. According to Tamba (UK Twins and Multiple Births Association), only 14% of mothers of multiples have six or more hours of sleep a night in the first year.
- Twins are more likely to be cared for in the neonatal unit. It's thought that this could lead to PND. This is because, instead of being able to celebrate your babies' birth, you're coping with worry, stress and guilt.
- Twin pregnancies are more prone to complications and the birth may be difficult too. This means you can begin motherhood feeling low and exhausted. If you had a bad birth experience, you may want to visit the hospital and go through your notes to help you come to terms with what happened.
- You may find that the reality of caring for your babies doesn't match up to your expectations of motherhood. If your twins are the result of IVF, for example, it may be hard to discuss these feelings with relatives and friends who assume you're thrilled to have the babies you longed for.
- Mothers of multiples may envy mothers with single babies as they feel robbed of the mother-child bond that others appear to enjoy.
- Isolation can be a big problem for mums of twins, who can find it harder to get out than mothers of single babies.
- Lack of support can be a serious problem for multiple mothers, and caring for two or more babies on your own is physically and emotionally draining.

It's important for you and your partner to be aware of the signs of PND because the faster it's diagnosed, the easier it is to treat.

#### Spotting signs of PND

Symptoms of PND can include:

- crying a lot
- difficulty sleeping
- thinking you're a bad mother
- not being able to cope, and blaming yourself
- anxiety and panic attacks
- being overwhelmed by even the smallest tasks
- feeling anxious or guilty
- feeling tense and irritable
- an inability to make decisions
- poor concentration

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*If you have the symptoms of PND or are feeling low or unable to cope, seek help as soon as possible through your GP. In NZ we are entitled to be referred for six free counselling sessions.*