

# I HAD **THREE** BABIES IN ONE YEAR!

**A**s any new mum will know, it's not easy getting to grips with your first child. Readjusting your whole life to a new routine of nappy changes and bottle feeds is surprisingly tricky. And when two more babies follow just 11 months later, the challenge is most definitely amplified...

Someone told me that every woman knows how many children she ideally wants. For me, that magic number was three. But back in 2014, at 24 years old and having just started a degree in psychology, I thought it would be a long time before I had to think about marriage and babies.

But then one day a gorgeous man walked into the cafe I was working at. After four months of chatting across the counter, I knew his name was Ben, he was 37 and a property developer. I didn't usually go for older men, but I kept hoping Ben would ask me out. Finally, in December 2014 he did.

## Unexpected news

We had our first date on Christmas Eve and the conversation flowed so easily. Within a month, I'd moved in with him. And by February 2015, Ben and I had already talked about our wish to start a family together after I graduated. Only then, in May 2015, I woke up feeling sick and dizzy. I didn't think anything of it, but when the symptoms persisted I bought a pregnancy test.

Staring at the two little pink lines, I couldn't believe my eyes! When I showed the test to Ben, he picked me up and whirled me around. 'We're going to be parents!' he grinned. My mum and dad were just as ecstatic when I told them.

At 12 weeks, we found out we were expecting a baby girl. And, apart from a little nausea, everything went so well. On 28 January 2016, I gave birth to

**'HE PICKED ME UP AND WHIRLED ME AROUND'**

Charlie by emergency caesarean section – she was a big baby at 9lb. Ben and I felt like the luckiest couple in the world.

Arriving back home was exciting but intimidating. Between the sleepless nights and dirty nappies, Ben and I were determined not to let our relationship suffer. We still enjoyed romantic meals and cuddles on the sofa whenever we could.

I'd heard breastfeeding was a natural contraceptive so I didn't even think about going on the pill. And when I started feeling groggy in the mornings, I just put it down to sleep deprivation. After all, Charlie was only six weeks old – and keeping us up every night!

Only then the headaches started, a dull, familiar ache that became harder to ignore. 'I feel like I'm pregnant again,' I told Ben, but he laughed it off. 'No way, it can't happen that quickly,' he said. And yet, two weeks later my period still hadn't arrived.

I was so convinced, I bought a pregnancy test. And, that April, the two little lines appeared again. Far from being upset, I was overjoyed. Yes, Charlie was only 12 weeks old at that point, but I was so excited.

I put the test in a gift box, and gave it to Ben as he walked through the door that evening. The look on his face was priceless, a mixture of joy and disbelief.

At the ultrasound, the technician looked confused as he swept the monitor across my belly. I worried something was wrong. But then he spoke. 'It looks like there's two heartbeats in there,' he said.

Ben looked as if he was about to pass

*Eliza Curby always wanted a big family, but she really wasn't expecting it to happen so quickly...*



Eliza spent most of daughter Charlie's first year pregnant

out. But there it was, the sound of two, little heartbeats drumming through the monitor.

Back at home, we both collapsed onto the sofa. I'll admit it was much sooner than we'd expected to be welcoming not just one but *two* new babies. But then Ben took my hands in his. 'Ready for round two?' he laughed. In that moment I knew there was nobody I'd rather do this with than him.

Guessing how people would react to the news became our favourite game. While some gasped with shock, others hugged us in delight. My mum was worried about how I'd cope with three babies under one. But I assured her as long as I had Ben I'd be fine.



Raising three babies is hard work!

WORDS: SARAH HOLMES AND REBECCA WRIGHT. PHOTOS: DAVID HAHNBÄUER SYNDICATION AUC/CAMERA PRESS

Two weeks later, I found out I was expecting twin boys. And it was fascinating comparing my pregnancy with Charlie to my one with the boys. Before, I was mobile and energetic. But this time around I was huge. At work, I could barely reach the counter, let alone see what I was doing!

## Hectic times

It was Christmas Eve 2016 when I gave birth for the second time in 11 months! Wolfe was born first, followed by Jack. They were both so tiny and delicate. The way they clasped their little fingers around Charlie's when she came to visit

a few hours later was just beautiful. With their big sister by their side, I knew my little boys would always be OK.

Taking all three home for the first time was a military operation. We'd switched our old car for a mini van, so we could physically fit all the car seats into the back. I'd thought strapping one baby in was a challenge, but trying to get all three buckled up was like a high stakes game of baby Jenga.

But slowly, we adapted to our frenetic new pace. Bath times became a frenzy of splashing and bubbles, leaving us looking like we'd walked through a car wash.

Now the twins are six months and

Charlie is 17 months, and we're taking them out more. Every trip requires a checklist of pushchairs, carriers, baby bags and blankets.

The older all three get, the more I can see how much they enjoy having each other around. And although my exhaustion is more intense, so too is the fun and love.

I'll admit it was a shock having three babies in one year. But while most parents get to experience the baby years at intervals, for us it's happening all at once. That's why I wouldn't wish away a minute of it. All of life is a phase, and I know I'm going to miss this one as soon as it's over. ☺