

Wisconsin mother meets baby delivered during COVID-19 coma

4 February 2021, by Carrie Antlfinger



In this Jan. 27, 2021 photo provided by Taryn Marie Photography, the Townsend family poses for a photo in Poynette, Wis. the day mother Kelsey Townsend came home from the hospital, nearly three months after being admitted due to COVID-19. Townsend, second from left, gave birth to Lucy, in her arms, via C-section on Nov. 4 while in a medically induced coma. She spent 75 days on lung and life support. She finally met the daughter she delivered face to face on Jan. 27. (Taryn Ziegler/Taryn Marie Photography via AP)

Nearly three months after Kelsey Townsend gave birth to her fourth child, the 32-year-old Wisconsin woman was finally face to face with her.

Lucy, now bright-eyed and alert, flashed her a smile.

"Hi. I love you. I love you so much. Yeah, I've missed you," Kelsey Townsend told her.

Townsend was in a medically-induced coma with COVID-19 when she gave birth to Lucy via [cesarean section](#) on Nov. 4, not long after getting to SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital in Madison. She ended up spending 75 days on life and lung support. She finally met Lucy on Jan. 27—the day

Kelsey was discharged from University Hospital in Madison.

"We instantly bonded when we met. She gave me a great big smile and looked at me like she knew exactly who I was and that made me feel just so happy," the Poynette, Wisconsin, woman said.

Dr. Jennifer Krupp, a Maternal Fetal Medicine specialist and the Women's and Newborn Health Medical Director for SSM Health Wisconsin Region, said it has been rare for the [hospital](#) to deliver a baby to a mother so sick with COVID-19.

Kelsey Townsend's [oxygen saturation](#) was very low when she arrived at the hospital—so low that a fetus' brain and other organs could be damaged—and her skin was tinged grey and blue, Dr. Thomas Littlefield said via email Wednesday, so her baby had to be delivered as soon as possible.



In this Jan. 27, 2021 photo provided by Taryn Marie Photography, Derek Townsend brings his daughter Lucy to meet her mother Kelsey Townsend for the first time, face to face in Poynette, Wis. Kelsey Townsend gave birth to Lucy via C-section on Nov. 4 while in a medically induced coma due to COVID-19. She spent 75 days on lung and life support. She finally met the daughter she delivered face to face on Jan. 27. (Taryn Ziegler/Taryn

Marie Photography via AP)

Doctors thought Townsend might need a double lung transplant at the end of December. But then she started improving—so much that she was moved out of the [intensive care unit](#), taken off a ventilator in mid-January and removed from the transplant waiting list.

Townsend's husband, Derek Townsend, described the experience as a "big roller coaster."

"There was many, many nights that I would get [phone calls](#) late at night and into the [early morning](#), and the doctors kind of informed me that they've done all that they can to support Kelsey and they're having a hard time stabilizing," he said. "So there was many times that we thought we were going to lose her."

Derek Townsend says even his baby daughter seemed to notice someone was missing when his wife was still hospitalized.

"The past three months with Lucy, you know, her head is always moving and she's always looking. And I told Kelsey that I believe she's just constantly looking for, for her," he said.



In this Jan. 27, 2021 photo provided by Taryn Marie Photography, Kelsey Townsend meets her daughter Lucy for the first time face to face in Poynette, Wis. Kelsey Townsend gave birth to Lucy via C-section on Nov. 4

while in a medically induced coma due to COVID-19. She spent 75 days on lung and life support. She was discharged from University Hospital in Madison on Jan. 27. (Taryn Ziegler/Taryn Marie Photography via AP)

The pair contracted COVID-19 despite taking precautions, Derek Townsend said. As he got better, his wife got worse. That's when they went to the hospital.

"Family is everything to me," Kelsey Townsend said. "So I have everything to live for right here and coming home. There was no question that I wouldn't."

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