

# Your Health

## Why did my BABIES DIE?

Nicola was desperate to be a mum again, but her body couldn't cope

**NICOLA GAMBLE, 31, Stalybridge, Gtr Manchester**

**A**s a single mum to my beautiful daughter Kiarrah, I couldn't imagine ever wanting another baby.

Her father had left before she was born and I had to work hard as a care assistant just to keep a roof over our heads.

But when Kiarrah was four, I fell in love with Gary. We were both 25, and when I became pregnant the next year we were delighted.

Then at 11 weeks I started bleeding. A scan showed I'd had a miscarriage. Our new baby had died at eight weeks.

Gary and I were destroyed. He couldn't even talk about it.

In time we decided to try again, and two months on I was pregnant. But our joy was crushed just

two weeks later when I lost that baby too.

So when, three months on, I fell pregnant yet again, Gary and I were too scared to get excited.

And sure enough, I started bleeding at 11 weeks. The baby had died two weeks earlier.

Kiarrah kept me going. At least I was a mum – luckier than so many women.

Even so, the miscarriages made me increasingly desperate to have another child.

But after going through the trauma of three more – a total of six lost babies – I was finally referred to a specialist.

A blood test revealed Hughes syndrome. It makes your blood sticky, so in each pregnancy

the placenta was being starved of oxygen, killing my babies.

'The good news is you *will* have a baby!' the doctor told me.

He prescribed injections of heparin, a blood-thinning drug.

A nurse showed me how to inject myself, with a squishy ball to practise using the needle on.

'As soon as you have a positive pregnancy test,' the doctor said, 'start injecting yourself every day. And take a low-dose aspirin daily

too. They'll keep your blood

flowing and save your baby.'

All geared up to try for a child again, Gary and I thought I'd fall pregnant straightaway.

But it took six months, and by then I was so anxious I did 10 pregnancy tests – all of them positive – before I believed it was actually true!

I injected myself as instructed, and nine months later, holding baby Mason for the first time, I felt my world was complete.

Then, when our little boy was two months old, that familiar queasy feeling of early pregnancy came upon me again.

My first thought was that Mason would soon have to share me with another baby.

My second thought was to get more injections, and fast!

Our daughter Bobbie-Brooke was born in July last year – just 11 months after Mason.

Having two babies in the same routine is lovely, and I'm so happy to think that Mason and Bobbie-Brooke will always have each other – as well as their adoring big sister.



Kiarrah with Mason and Bobbie-Brooke



Gary and me

### NICOLA'S CONDITION

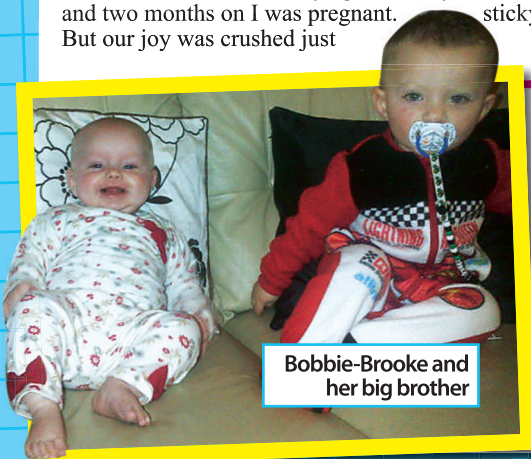
**What is it?** Hughes syndrome is a condition that makes blood sticky and more prone to clotting.

**Symptoms** Recurrent miscarriage is one symptom. Others include headaches, memory problems and thrombosis. One in five women who suffer recurrent miscarriages is affected by it.

**How is it diagnosed?** With a blood test identifying high levels of anticardiolipin antibodies.

**Treatment** Blood-thinning drugs, such as heparin and aspirin, can help maintain pregnancy.

**More info** The Hughes Syndrome Foundation. Call 020 7188 8217 or visit [hughes-syndrome.org](http://hughes-syndrome.org).



Bobbie-Brooke and her big brother

**3 TO TRY**  
**MASSAGE OILS**

**The Body Shop Sensual Massage Oil, 150ml, £10**

A blend inspired by Polynesian massage rituals. It had a stimulating, warm aroma – perfect for couples, our tester said.



**Neal's Yard Remedies Soothing Massage Oil, 100ml, £12.50**

This non-greasy oil was absorbed easily and smelt delicious. Ingredients include almond, avocado, jojoba and cypress.



**Tisserand De-Stress Body Massage Oil, 100ml, £8.50**

The pump action made this easy to apply. It's 95 per cent organic, with lavender, marjoram and mandarin, but lavender was the strongest scent.

