



MY STORY

My journey to mummy...

BY STACEY HILL / 11TH OCT, 2016

Walking hand in hand with Keith, bum poking out from my hospital gown, cheeks clenched so not to shoot out my pessary, wrists labelled up like a lab rat, and with an entourage of unfamiliar faces watching, we dragged our third wheel, infertility down the corridor for the last time...

This wasn't how I'd imagined making a baby. There was no candlelit dinner, mixing drinks and ripping each others clothes off on the stairs in a spontaneous moment of passion.

We'd spent the last few years of our relationship in 2 week waits, using all of my data allowance googling the consistency of my cervical gloop, dip testing every pee I had by catching it in the lid of my hairspray. Our love life was pencilled in code on the calendar, our private life became everyone else's business, and we forefitted our after sex snuggles for laying with legs akimbo and fingers crossed.

Years passed and there was still no baby.

We rarely spoke about the next steps – it was the elephant in the room really – because the pressure was already immense between the two of us. Even being together at that point for 7 years, (married for one), the subject of infertility was awkward to have.

Our first year of marriage was spent coming to terms with news my mum was terminally ill, and having pulled forward our wedding day to be sure she was there, she was gone before we honeymooned, and the loss hit us hard. With this brutal wake up call of how short life is, we finally sought help in the summer of 2013.

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We were soon referred to specialists for a good prod and poke in search of answers. Keith was in his 30's, I was 9 years younger, so although we never pointed fingers, in my heart I really thought we were dealing with male infertility. After laying out our medical history, biological clocks and my obsessively accurate menstrual diary, we got our stamps in the book, 'Unexplained'.

I didn't know how to feel. I'd researched all aspects of this crappy word 'Infertility', but there always seemed to be a conclusion and a way round it.

We were offered NHS funding for 3 rounds of IUI and 1 round of IVF in the hope this would give us our baby, starting in January 2014.

The first two test days came and went and the third was cancelled due to over stimulation. All those weeks of meds, endless journeys to hospital, panicked phone calls from Keith stuck in traffic with his rapidly expiring sperm sample. All for nothing. Every hope I dared to build was slowly starting to crumble around me, and by the time we got to repeat the abandoned cycle, all I could focus on was the next step, IVF.

After having a months break from the rat race, the light at the end of the tunnel reappeared. My mindset was positive and I'd replenished the stock of hope I'd lost to IUI. It felt different this time. All the failed IUI's, just practice runs for the real thing. My injection sites had healed, my ovaries were rested, and Dr Keith had mastered the art of mixing the menopur and injecting my leg, while I hummed through gritted teeth and flared nostrils.

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It was soon that time again, the 'vagina open days'. I was convinced every member of the NHS and all the faces in the waiting room had seen my foo by now, and was beginning to feel more intimate with the scanning probe than my hubby.

We began the daily injections for 'Long protocol' IVF on 11th June – suppressing my natural cycle first before adding more injections to stimulate my ovaries – and couldn't help but feel positive as regular scans confirmed my body was doing exactly what it should be doing.

Fast forward to 7th July, egg collection day. I woke up to news they had managed to extract 21 eggs. All we could do now was wait. After an anxious few days, 12 fertilised, all dividing nicely under the watchful eye of the embryoscope.

We arrived at the hospital on the 12th July, all set for a 5 day transfer. All the way through this process we were told we would only have one embryo transferred, and never questioned it, so to our surprise we were given the option of having not just one, but two put in. We what if'd and butted for a bit, before going full steam ahead with the idea of coming home with two 'embies' on board.

What happened in that room changed our lives forever. We walked out PUPO, (Pregnant until proven otherwise).

This was it, our time had come. We took a deep breath and walked down the corridor hand in hand, for the final leg of our infertility journey, the transfer. What happened in that room changed our lives forever. We walked out PUPO, (Pregnant until proven otherwise).



Kickstartbabies

Within 5 days, I knew I was pregnant and it was confirmed on my official test day, 23rd July.

On 12th August, a scan showed a perfect beating heart, measuring 7 weeks and 1 day – due at the end of March 2015.

The best bit? There were two!!

"You're going to be a twin mummy!"

Everything. Absolutely everything upto this moment was worth it. The tears, the fear, the pain, the embarrassment, everything. While Keith tried his hardest not to fall off his chair, I just wanted to shout it from the rooftops.

The 12 week scan landed on my 28th Birthday, the perfect gift was to see them again, and finally announce to the world that we were pregnant.

Our beautiful baby boys, Ronnie and Arnie were born by emergency cesarean on 30th January 2015, arriving at 31 weeks & 4 days, 100 miles from home, following an amazing pregnancy but early labour.

After a 3 week stay in Neo for Arnie, and a 6 week stay for Ronnie, life as a four began.

I still pinch myself that this is my life now. We feel the luckiest people alive, and at just over 18 months, Ronnie and Arnie are thriving.

IVF is never planned for. It's not how people imagine starting a family. But I for one am thankful to have been through such an amazing experience and urge anyone going through it to embrace it, document your journey and share it. It's probably going to be the best thing to ever happen to you!

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Written by Stacey Hill

My name is Stacey Hill, co-creator of Kickstartbabies, a brutally honest blog of my journey to mummy, through IVF and beyond. I'm proud wife to Keith and now co-creator of our gorgeous, twin boys, Ronnie and Arnie. My dream is to get more people talking openly about infertility, to fill in the blanks on what to really expect along the way and share my own account, in the hope it reaches just that one person in need of a little hope, or just a good laugh at my expense. If you want a peek inside life as an IVF survivor come twin mum, look no further. You can find me on Instagram, Facebook and my blog kickstarterbabies.com

