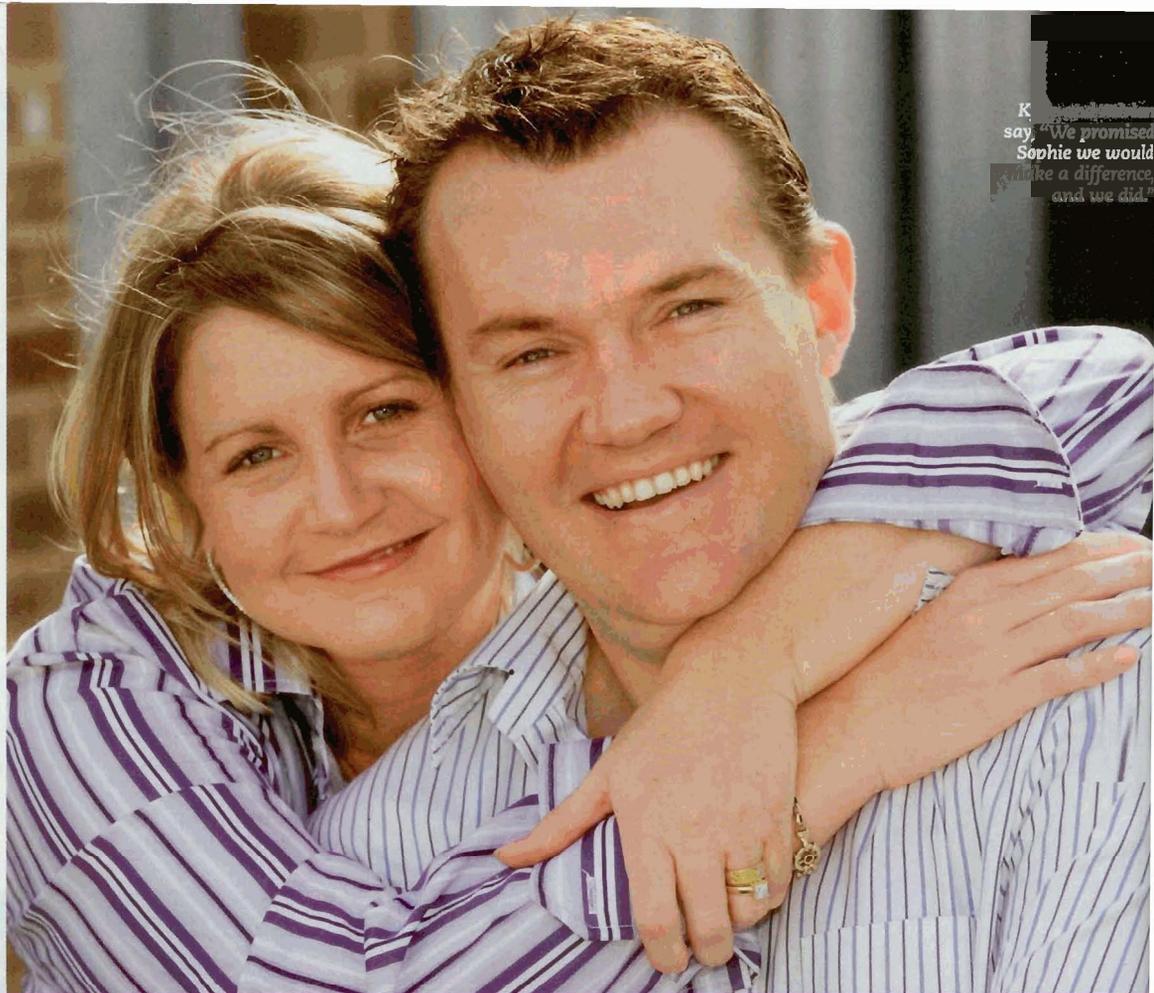


HEALTH

Woman's Day columnist Adrian Raftery and his wife Kylie talk about coming to terms with the loss of their stillborn baby girl

One in four couples will lose their baby due to early miscarriage. A further two per cent will lose their little one after 12 weeks when the baby is fully formed. Often it's even later, when the nursery is ready.



K
say, "We promised
Sophie we would
make a difference,
and we did."

WHEN BABY DREAMS ARE SHATTERED

Tragically, *Woman's Day* finance expert Adrian Raftery, 37, and his wife Kylie, 35, know this pain all too well.

"Kylie was 32 weeks pregnant with severe pain, and under observation in a private hospital for a weekend," Adrian says.

"About 1am on the Sunday our doctor noticed the baby's heartbeat was reducing. We could see in his eyes that something was dreadfully wrong... we were to find out later that Kylie's uterus had ruptured, which is a rare complication of pregnancy.

"Once this happens there's only four minutes to get the baby out. The mortality rate for the child is 94 per cent and it's also very risky for the mother.

"I was praying to God both my girls would be OK, when the midwife told me my little baby Sophie was stillborn and handed her to me. I was so shocked. Sophie was so gorgeous, so perfectly formed, with little tufts of curly black hair just like my old man.

"It was the worst experience you could imagine, holding your dead daughter with her body still warm - knowing your wife had a 50 per cent chance of survival too. After five hours of surgery, Kylie woke up and knew from the look on my face we had lost our little Sophie, and her eyes welled up with tears.

"Doctors suspect the cause was a very rare complication

from a previous D&C [dilatation and curettage] after a miscarriage, when an instrument left a small puncture in Kylie's uterus.

"We were then given more devastating news - that Kylie would never survive another pregnancy. But then, a few months ago, in the middle of our despair we found hope. Kylie's incredibly selfless best friend Anee offered to be a surrogate mum using my sperm and Kylie's eggs through Sydney IVF, which we are starting soon."

Adrian explains pregnancy loss is often swept under the carpet, despite 70,000 babies being lost every year through miscarriage, stillbirth and

prematurity. That's more than Australia's total annual cancer deaths and 35 times greater than the annual national road toll.

Adrian recently ran the Sydney Marathon and raised \$28,000 for Bears of Hope (www.bearsofhope.org.au), which gives a teddy bear in hospital to every family who loses a baby.

"We cuddle our teddy, whose name is Bluey, every day," he says. "We were grateful to have something of Sophie's memory - because when you walk down the hospital corridor and hear the other newborns crying, but you're walking out of there empty-handed, it's the hardest walk that you will ever have to do."

MISCARRIAGE ETIQUETTE

When it comes to miscarriage or any form of pregnancy loss, never say:

X "You can always have another."
X They don't want another baby, they want this baby.

X "Now you have an angel looking after you." They don't want an angel, they want their baby back.

X "It's probably for the best."
X The best for whom?

X "Be grateful for the children you have ..." It isn't a question of not appreciating what they have.

DO say:

✓ "I'm so sorry" or "I'm here if you need me" or "What can I do to help?"

Why it happens

Where miscarriage is concerned, the age of the eggs is often a factor.

"Twenty-year-olds have a 10 per cent chance of miscarriage with each conception, compared to 35-39 year-olds, who have a 25 per cent chance, and 40-45 year-olds, who have a 50 per cent chance," says Dr Devora Lieberman from the Miscarriage Management Program at Sydney IVF.

"Smoking (mother or father) is also linked to miscarriage, and alcohol is no longer advised in pregnancy or the second half of a menstrual cycle if trying to conceive."

Other studies show high doses of coffee (more than two cups a day) are linked.

"But outside of these things, you can do nothing to prevent miscarriage, which is nature's way of ending a pregnancy that is genetically not developing properly," Devora says.

Fortunately, for most couples, even multiple miscarriages don't mean the end of baby dreams.

"Even for a 35-year-old woman who has had two miscarriages, the chances of her next pregnancy going to full term are still about 77 per cent," Devora explains.



Hugh Jackman and Deborra-lee Furness suffered a miscarriage. After multiple tries for a baby, they eventually adopted gorgeous Oscar, now 9, and Ava, 4!

FERTILITY STARS



Brooke Shields suffered both miscarriage and infertility. She also developed postnatal depression after her first daughter, Rowan, was born in May 2003 - that's about four times more common in IVF mums, a new study shows. Brooke later had a second daughter, Grier, now 3.



Sharon Stone suffered a string of miscarriages, and then adopted three boys - Roan, now 9, Laird, 4, and Quinn, 3.

Yoplait
review



Yoplait elivaé

- now a part of Jane Hall's everyday routine.

"Yoplait elivaé works for me, it's exactly what I needed. Why would you not give it a go."

With its blend of probiotic cultures, Yoplait elivaé can help restore the natural balance in your digestive system.

It's quick and easy, and comes in a great range of delicious flavours.

Eating one 150g serve is all you need to start feeling the benefits.

Feel the difference for yourself, try Yoplait elivaé today.

Help ... 'Small Miracles' from the Bonnie Babes Foundation tells the story of parents who survive the heartbreak of baby loss. A must-have guide for people looking to rebuild their life after infertility, it's available from all good bookstores for \$24.99. For more information visit www.bbf.org.au



Yoplait
elivaé
inner bliss v outer spark

www.yoplait-elivae.com