

## **Baby with three mums: Katy couldn't have children so her sister provided an egg... and her sister-in-law acted as the surrogate**

- **Katy Slade has a rare genetic disorder meaning she can never have children**
- **Katy and husband David used Katy's sister's eggs while David's sister acted as a surrogate**
- **Katy and David's dream has now come true and they are mother and father to baby Beatrix**

By Andrew Levy

Katy and David Slade always knew they wanted a baby of their own.

But with Katy unable to have children because of a rare genetic condition, they realised they might need some help to make their dream of a family come true.

In the end, that help came from close to home. David's older sister, Jamie Allan, and Katy's younger sister, Lucy Marks, joined forces to help them bring their daughter Beatrix into the world. Lucy provided the egg while Jamie carried the baby for nine months.

Sibling support: David and Katy Slade (back) with their surrogate baby Beatrix born from Katy's sister-in-law Jamie Allan (front right) using eggs donated by her sister Lucy Marks (front left)

'If it wasn't for our sisters we would still be childless,' said Mrs Slade, 31. 'It's the best gift ever and we love them so much for it. I always knew I wanted to be a mother. It was just a question of how.' Mr Slade, 33, added: 'We still can't believe we are parents. We feel like the luckiest couple alive.'

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'Beatrix is our little angel and we'll forever be thankful to our sisters for making our dream come true.' Mrs Slade, a primary school teacher, has a genetic condition that means she has no reproductive organs. It was diagnosed when she was a girl and she remembers tearfully telling Lucy of her sorrow that she would never be a mother.

It was then that Lucy promised to donate one of her own eggs when the time came. Years later, married and desperate to start a family, Mrs Slade asked her little sister if she had really meant what she said.

Proud: David and Katy are the proud parents of a baby girl who was created with the help of their amazing sisters

Mother and daughter together: Katy and David decided to call her Beatrix - the middle name of the nan whose bequest financed their treatment

'I cried when Lucy said she would still donate her eggs for me,' she recalled. 'It meant that, genetically, the baby would be linked to both me and David.' But Lucy, who had a boyfriend, and no children of her own, decided against carrying the baby for her sister as well. 'We knew she wouldn't be a surrogate too because the baby would feel too much like hers,' Mrs Slade said. 'It would have been hard for her to have her first pregnancy and then hand the baby to me.'

The Slades, who live in a £400,000 detached house in Romford, Essex, were reluctant to find a stranger to act as a surrogate after hearing stories about women who demanded to keep the baby at the last minute. But when Mr Slade told his older sister Jamie Allan, 35, about the blem she offered to help.

Promise: Katy's sister Lucy (left) came to her aid by keeping a childhood promise to donate her eggs which were fertilised by David whose sister Jamie (right) then acted as a surrogate

Girl power: Katy Slade (centre) on her wedding day with her sister Lucy Marks (left) and sister in law Jamie Allan

After three children with her printer husband, Wayne, she felt her family was complete and was sure she would be able to happily hand the baby over after nine months of pregnancy. So the agreement was made. Mrs Slade's sister would provide the egg, Mr Slade would fertilise it and it would be implanted into his sister, who would carry the baby.

Our beautiful girl: Newborn baby Beatrix Eileen taking a bath

Over the next few months, Mr Slade's sperm was frozen, while his sister and sister-in-law were given hormone injections – one to build the lining of her womb and the other to help her produce more eggs to be harvested. Two embryos were implanted in Jamie in December 2011 and she discovered she was pregnant on Christmas Eve. The 20-week scan revealed the family were expecting one baby, a girl. She was named Beatrix and given the second name Eileen – in honour of her great-grandmother, who had left a bequest that paid for the £8,000 private IVF treatment. Beatrix was born at Queen's Hospital, Romford, on September 1 last year.

Mrs Slade said: 'I held her for the first time and looked at Lucy, Jamie and David. It was incredible that every single one of us had helped bring Beatrix into the world.'

'Beatrix is very much our own – our own little miracle.'

Lucy, a 27-year-old charity administrator, who lives with the Slades, said: 'I just adore Beatrix, she's absolutely wonderful.'

'But although my eggs were used to create her, she will always be my niece.' Jamie, who runs an after-school club, said: 'Carrying the baby was something I was happy to do for them. I knew that she wasn't mine and I focused on that.'

Long search: Katy and David started exploring the possibility of finding a surrogate stranger - but were put off by stories of some who dropped out or became too attached to the baby, then their sisters came to the rescue