



## Mother who suffered a stillbirth at 41 weeks recalls the agonising moment she lost her daughter

- **WARNING GRAPHIC CONTENT:** Fiona and Niall Cassidy suffered a stillbirth
- Fiona recalled how she 'desperately wanted' to hear her daughter Matilda cry
- The couple spoke about how strange it was to bond with her after she died
- They have since had another daughter called Emme who appeared on Lorraine

By [MOLLY ROSE PIKE FOR MAILONLINE](#)

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A mother who suffered a stillbirth at 41 weeks has opened up about the moment she realised her daughter had died - and the desperate need to hear her cry after she was born.

Fiona and Niall Cassidy lost their daughter Matilda last year and appear in Channel 4 documentary *Child Of Mine* to raise awareness of stillbirth.

Speaking on *Lorraine* on Monday, Niall revealed how strange it felt old Matilda in his arms because he began to bond with her but felt the overwhelming sadness of losing her at the same time.

Almost a year to the day that Matilda was born later they welcomed their second daughter Emme, who arrived safely and appeared on the ITV chat show with the couple on Monday.

Fiona revealed how she decided to treasure every moment of her pregnancy with Emme, knowing it could 'stop at any point'.





Fiona and Niall Cassidy's daughter Matila was stillborn last year and they are raising awareness of the tragedy by speaking about their loss. Pictured: Fiona (left) with their second daughter Emme and Niall (right)



A tearful Fiona revealed how she desperately wanted 'to hear her daughter cry when she was born. The couple (pictured) in Channel 4 documentary Child of Mine, which is about stillbirth

She recalled how she felt when Matilda didn't cry after she was born when she realised she'd lost her.

She said: 'I remember the midwife saying "She's very fresh." You just desperately, desperately want her to cry and make a noise.'



'You think for a few moments should you hold her, should you not hold her?'

When Niall held Matilda he remembered struggling to understand how he was feeling.



Niall revealed how it felt strange to hold Matilda (pictured) in his arms because he began to bond with her



The couple didn't realise how common stillbirth was until it happened to them and they met other couples who had suffered the same. Pictured: Niall and Matilda and a member of their family

He explained: 'It's weird because you feel a bond to Matilda but it's not quite what you're hoping for so it was a tough situation.'



They appear in Channel's *Child Of Mine* to raise awareness of stillbirth, as it wasn't until it happened to them that they realised how many people go through the same thing.

When the couple discovered they were expecting Emme, they decided to enjoy every moment of the pregnancy.

Fiona said: 'After having lost Matilda [Emme's] pregnancy was even more important in some ways because I realised that any point it could stop, so I tried to enjoy every kick, every little movement I felt.'



Fiona decided to treasure every moment of her pregnancy with Emme because they knew it could 'stop at any point'. Pictured: Fiona and Niall on *Lorraine*



They plan to show Emme (pictured) the documentary when she is older so she can understand what happened to her older sister Matilda



Strangers will often ask the couple if Emme is their first child, and Fiona has sometimes said yes but then felt guilty about Matila.

She explained: 'It's a tough question to answer, if I let it go later on I feel guilty to Matilda, so I say she's my second. Why hide it? It's part of life.'

They are planning to show Emme the documentary about Matilda when she is older so she can understand what happened to her older sister.

The couple are also hoping that the programme will help them speak to their friends about the stillbirth, as they kept it to themselves.

Fiona said: 'When Emme is older its going to be an amazing thing to show her and explain what we went through. Some friends have said "Wow we didn't realise what you actually went through." We kind of kept it to ourselves as much as we could.'

***Child of Mine* airs on Thursday at 10pm on Channel 4**

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## WHAT IS A STILLBIRTH?

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A stillbirth occurs when a baby is born dead after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

If a baby dies before 24 weeks of pregnancy, it is known as a miscarriage.

Not all stillbirths can be prevented, however, not smoking or drinking, as well as not sleeping on your back and attending all antenatal appointments can reduce the risk.

### **What are the signs?**

Signs may include the baby not moving as much as normal.

Pregnant women should contact their doctor immediately if they notice a difference to their baby's movement.

### **What are the causes?**

Stillbirths do not always have an obvious cause but may occur due to complications with the placenta or a birth defect.

They are also more likely to occur if women suffer from high blood pressure, diabetes or an infection that affects the baby, such as flu.

Stillbirths are more likely to occur if women are having twins or multiple pregnancies, are overweight, smoke, are over 35 or have a pre-existing condition, such as epilepsy.

## **What happens after a stillbirth?**

If a baby has died, women may wait for their labour to start naturally or they may be induced if their health is at risk.

Bereavement support groups are available to parents who have suffered stillbirths.

Some find it helpful to name their baby or take pictures with them.

*Source: **NHS Choices***