

# 'Surgery on my uterus left me unable to conceive'

**Vicki Sigl, 42, lives with husband Dennis, 44, and their children Isabella, eight, and Matthew, three, in Wisconsin, US**

'After the birth of my daughter the thought of struggling to have another child never crossed my mind. But five days after giving birth I began to haemorrhage and the events that followed jeopardised my chances of having another baby. I was rushed to hospital where surgeons removed a portion of retained placenta.

'The surgery saved my life. I didn't know it then but it probably also left me with Asherman's syndrome, which is severe scarring of the uterus that can leave a woman infertile.

'I got pregnant shortly after the surgery, but it ended in miscarriage. The scar tissue prevented my womb from expanding properly with the growing baby. To make things worse, I was unable to miscarry naturally and had to undergo two more operations to empty my uterus. But this surgery resulted in further scarring, and after that my periods stopped completely.

'I was put on hormonal treatments and underwent numerous tests but no one could find out what was wrong. One night, unable to sleep, I searched the internet for some answers. I found an Asherman's website – the first time I'd heard of the condition. My symptoms were consistent with Asherman's syndrome, but when I suggested this to my GP he told me the condition was incredibly rare and unlikely to be the problem.

'A few months later, my GP agreed to an x-ray of my uterus. This revealed severe scarring that ran from one side of the womb



Matthew's birthday is always special for Dennis and Vicki

*'I had a scan every week and held my breath waiting for something to happen'*



## WHAT IS ASHERMAN'S SYNDROME?

- Asherman's syndrome is a build-up of scar tissue in the uterus.
- It is rare but sometimes happens after women have surgery on their uterus or get a severe pelvic infection.
- Asherman's can lead to your periods stopping, and even miscarriage or infertility.
- Up to 80% of women regain their fertility after surgery to remove the scar tissue.
- For more information, visit [ashermans.org](http://ashermans.org).

to the other, fusing it shut. I was told my chances of conceiving again in this state were almost nil and was encouraged to start thinking about surgery to clear the scar tissue.

'Because Asherman's syndrome is under-diagnosed and few doctors see or treat cases, it's often treated inappropriately. I wanted to ensure this didn't happen to me, so I went on the internet again and found a local specialist.

'Treatment isn't simple, with some women undergoing several operations to clear the scar tissue and no guarantee that fertility will be restored. However, just six weeks after my first surgery I was told that I could start trying to conceive again.

'Dennis and I took some time out to get over the emotional rollercoaster we'd been through. Then we started trying for a baby; six months later I was pregnant. Asherman's brings an increased risk of several pregnancy complications, so I had a scan every week and held my breath

waiting for something to happen. But I reached 38 weeks with no problems, then the doctors decided to induce me.

'The birth itself went well and I can't describe the emotions I felt when I got to meet our healthy baby son. There were tears all round the room as all the doctors knew the turmoil we'd been through to have him.

'There are so many women out there who have Asherman's and don't even know it, or are unaware that it can be successfully treated. I really hope that with increased knowledge, awareness and expert treatment, many other sufferers will finally be able to hold their longed-for babies in their arms – just like me!'