

Vali couldn't be happier, having finally realised her dream of being a parent.



Twins Kaia and Alexis really are miracle babies.



# My twins formed OUTSIDE the womb

After losing both ovaries to cancer, this mum defied the odds... and then some!

**W**hen Kaia and Alexis Creus grow up and tell friends they came from their mummy's tummy, the sisters won't be telling tales. Thanks to a revolutionary procedure, their mum Vali is the world's first woman to give birth after having eggs grown on her abdominal wall.

Vali and devoted hubby Dean are the proud parents of two precious little girls, born on November 19 last year. Alexis weighed in at 3.32kg and her sister Kaia 3.26kg.

**"It really is a medical marvel they were able to grow eggs outside the pelvis, allowing us to utilise IVF,"** a beaming Vali, 35, tells *Woman's Day*. "Every new parent thinks their child is one in a billion - and in our case the odds were even greater!"

Vali had survived cancer but lost both ovaries. At 19, a tumour the size of a golf ball was found on her left ovary, which had to be removed. Five years later,

her right ovary was removed, but frozen in the hope Vali could one day become a mum.

When science caught up with the theory, ovarian tissue was put in the front wall of Vali's abdomen to produce eggs. Using IVF procedures, the eggs were fertilised in a laboratory and the embryo implanted into her womb.

Doctors across the world are acknowledging the pioneering work of Melbourne IVF and The Royal Women's Hospital.

"The entire journey has been surreal," says Vali. "When they described the procedure, Dean looked at me and said, 'It's like a science-fiction movie.'"

Dean, 30, says he'll never forget seeing his girls for the first time. **"Ten little toes and fingers, strong heartbeats, healthy lungs - it took a while to sink in."** "I looked at Vali and said, 'They're here, we're parents and they're ours! It was overwhelming,'" recalls the doting dad.



The twin girls don't yet know how lucky they are.

## HOW THEY DID IT

- ▶ Seven years after Vali's right ovary was removed, tissue was grafted onto the her abdomen.
- ▶ After a few months, the tissue started working and two single eggs were produced. Both were fertilised, implanted and

became viable pregnancies. ▶ "Being able to graft ovarian tissue into the abdominal wall increases the possibilities of conception for women with severe pelvic disease," says Associate Professor Kate Stern from Melbourne IVF.