

## 'I lost three, but I got four back'

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By Carole Schrock, The Star

If you want to hear God laugh, tell him your plans.

It sometimes seems no matter how much we plot our lives, we get thrown a curve that forces us to reroute.



Kristile Cain gets a kiss from her daughter Alexis while little brother Jayden is in the middle.

*Carol Dorsett/The Star*

Today Kristile Cain celebrates being a mother four times over. But only five years ago, the chances of her and her husband, Eddie, having any children did not look good.

"We started trying in July 2000," the University Park resident said. "As soon as I stopped my birth control, we got pregnant. Two weeks later, my father died."

Two weeks after that, Kristile suffered a miscarriage that doctors suggested was caused by stress. The couple took a break from trying to conceive, but started again in 2001. Kristile miscarried a second time.

Doctors found nothing to explain her difficulty in maintaining pregnancy. They prescribed progesterone supplements and in 2002, Kristile became pregnant a third time.

"I had another miscarriage," she said. The doctors still found nothing wrong, and Kristile began taking a fertility drug.



Kristile Cain with her son Jayden.

*Carol Dorsett/The Star*

One round of the drug brought no results, so the couple tried again. After an ultrasound, Kristile's doctors said they still found no signs of life.

Five weeks later, however, another ultrasound picked up two heartbeats. Kristile was pregnant with twins.

There was a scare during the pregnancy when Kristile suffered a hemorrhage, but the pregnancy continued. Later, she had to put on hold her job as a computer technician at University of Chicago and go on bed rest.

"I was having contractions that I couldn't feel," she said. "They put me on all kinds of drugs: antibiotics, steroid shots and a terbutaline pump, a muscle relaxant to stop the contractions."

Eddie administered the steroid shots, he said, often distracting his wife before injecting her. They waited pensively while their children, which they now knew were two girls, grew in Kristile's womb.



Kayla (left) and Alexis Cain take photos around their house. Their parents bought the girls cameras because they enjoy photography.

*Carol Dorsett/The Star*

"I stopped the drugs, and the girls arrived four days later," Kristile said.

Perfectly healthy, Kayla and Alexis were born on April 25, four days after Kristile's birthday and about two weeks before Mother's Day.

She said she was spoiled in those first few weeks, as her mother and mother-in-law stayed with her to help.

"As soon as the girls were born, I immediately went on the pill," Kristile recalled. The couple had no intentions of having more children. But one day Kristile realized she had run out of her prescription.

A positive pregnancy test followed, and a doctor's visit confirmed it. Though it wasn't in the couple's plans, they were excited to be having another baby.

"We thought, 'It'll be one baby. We've done two. This will be a piece of cake,' " Kristile said.

But women who take some fertility drugs even once have a higher probability of conceiving multiples in any future pregnancy, Kristile said. She was one of these women.

Last year, the couple had another set of twins. Jayden and Kristopher were born on May 12, two days before Mother's Day.

"Both boys were breach," Kristile said. "They told me I had to have a C-section. I cried and cried, but it went better than I expected."

Jayden was fine, but Kristopher had trouble breathing and his insulin levels would not stabilize. He stayed in the natal intensive care unit for 11 days until he was well enough to go home.

The Cains said they were more prepared for their second twin set. However, they sold some of their baby accessories, including two car seats, since they didn't anticipate needing them.

Besides getting very little sleep, Kristile said she loves being a mother. Her husband marvels at her time-management skills.

"The scariest thing is being outnumbered," Eddie said. "The boys are a lot more high maintenance than the girls were. Kris does a really good job of being organized."

In addition to working full time, Kristile works as an amateur photographer at birthday parties and family reunions. She also created the Web site for her church, Hillcrest Christian Church in Hazel Crest.

Having four young children is exhausting and expensive, the couple said. Thankfully, Kristile said insurance covered every medical expense throughout her conception and pregnancies. The couple's biggest bill is for formula.



Kristile Cain (left) watches her husband, Eddie, play with their twin boys Kristopher (left) and Jayden as their daughters Alexis (left) and Kayla play upstairs.  
*Carol Dorsett/The Star*

And the kids never stop. If one settles down, another stirs up the pot. However, the girls are friends, which helps. Their mom said they keep one another company. And even though they're only 4, the daughters help care for their brothers. Kayla chases after the boys when they make a crawl for the stairs.

There are lots of questions from strangers.

"The attention can be good and bad, especially when you're in a hurry," Kristile said.

Among the questions people ask:

Are they twins? Yes.

Are they identical? No. Both sets are fraternal.

"My favorite is the follow up to that one: 'How do you tell them apart?' " Eddie said. "They're not identical."

People even inquire whether the couple used fertility drugs, among other personal questions.

Kristile discusses these and other hazards and joys of being a mother of twins on two Internet message boards she facilitates.

"The message boards helped a whole lot," she said. "When people don't understand what you're going through, they try to be sensitive, but are inadvertently insensitive."

When she was suffering through miscarriages, it was difficult to go to baby showers and especially the doctor's office, sitting with pregnant women.

Despite the initial heartache and physical strain she endured, Kristile said she would do it all over again.

"I love being a mom. It's exhausting, but I love the hugs, kisses, smiles and cuddling, even in the middle of the night.

"I lost three, but I got four back. Now I laugh at people who are overwhelmed by one."