

## Life etc...



# How I coped with...

family

## BEING AN OLDER MUM

*Nicole Klieff, 48, from Camberley, Surrey, is dealing with a four year old—as well as the menopause.*

**‘When I hear my daughter calling “Mummy” it’s the most special feeling.**

Like most women, in my twenties and thirties I assumed that one day I’d have a family. I had a career in corporate hospitality but I’ve always loved children, and when I married Barry, who’s 51 and an estate agent, in 1995, we were keen to try for a baby. After three years, we tried IVF six times with no success. I was exhausted by it, so Barry and I made the agonising decision to knock it on the head. We got a dog and resigned ourselves to life without children. Then I read about Nottingham’s CARE clinic, which helps couples with inexplicable infertility. With the help of steroids and other drugs, I was thrilled when I got pregnant in August 2003, at 43. But the pregnancy was tough. I was glad to be working from home as I was sick throughout the day.

‘After a difficult birth, my immune system was knocked badly, but when I held our beautiful

baby girl, Lauren, in my arms for the first time, I had to pinch myself. I couldn’t believe I was really a mum at last. The first year wasn’t easy. It took time to adjust to the exhausting rituals of motherhood. And I was very protective of Lauren. I’d waited so long for her, and I couldn’t bear to let her out of my sight in case anything happened. I was so tired – if I’d been ten years younger, I’m sure I’d have been more able to cope physically. As time went on, I relaxed into it, but it was hard at times. When Lauren was a toddler, I’d spend the morning running around with her, and after lunch, I’d lie down for a nap when she drifted off. Now, I’m starting the menopause and it’s not Lauren keeping me up at night but the hot flushes! I’m certainly more tired than the younger mums at the nursery, but I have no regrets. Lauren is the most precious gift and Barry and I are so happy we’re finally parents.’

# Get the



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### FLIGHTS

**For cheap seats,** go for less popular midweek or early-morning bookings with the budget airlines, and sign up for ‘early bird’ emails to find out in advance about special offers. Even using a scheduled airline, the earlier you book, the cheaper the fare, but to find out which airlines offer the best seats, go to [www.airlinequality.com](http://www.airlinequality.com), where passengers review seats, highlighting the best seat numbers to ask for at check-in. Before booking, view each airline’s seat size at [www.seatguru.com](http://www.seatguru.com). Once on board, if you’re not happy with your seat and you can see empty ones, ask the cabin crew if you can move once the plane has taken off. The best seats will always be in first class, but if you can’t afford the fare, join the airline’s frequent flyer programme, advises Louise MacDonald from travel company Lonely Planet ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)). ‘There’s more chance of an upgrade if you’re a loyal customer,’ she explains. ‘Ask to be marked down as SFU (suitable for upgrade) at check-in, which gives the impression you’re a regular customer who’s been upgraded before.’ If you’re doing this, dress smartly so you can fit in with the first-class passengers.

### RESTAURANTS

**Never ask** for the ‘best table’, as restaurants will claim all their tables are equally good. For more table choice,

avoid Friday and Saturday evenings, when restaurants are most busy, and at restaurants where it’s hard to get a booking, go for lunch on a Monday or Tuesday. ‘If you’re determined to get

### Hotels

**Book for midweek or Sunday nights for cheaper deals.** After 4pm when hotels are keen to sell their last rooms, you can usually negotiate a discount. Check [www.laterooms.com](http://www.laterooms.com) to save up to 70 per cent on standard room rates.