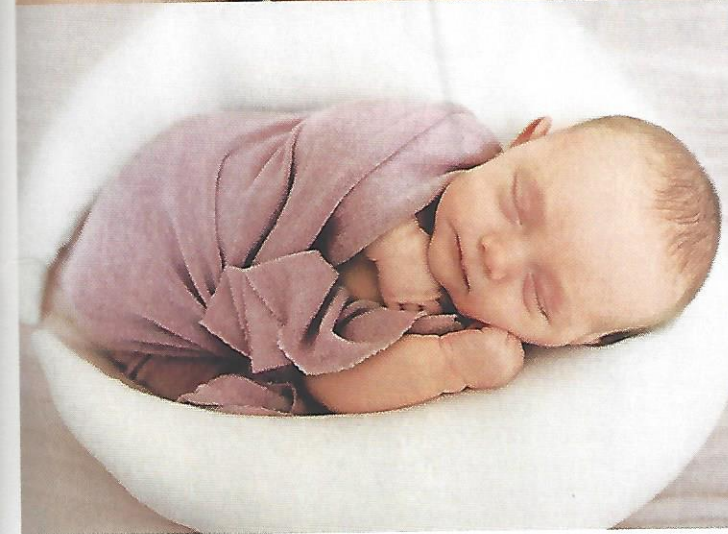


Ali cradles baby Isabella



two. Being worried just kind of comes with the territory.

"We can do things that we wouldn't have known to do last time like really look after her skin from early on. So if she gets eczema we will get on it, treating it really early, keeping the skin barrier healthy."

They have been taking Isla to an allergist, Professor Adam Fox, who they say has really helped, with her now able to tolerate some foods that were off limits. "We did peanut desensitisation and Isla is now on a peanut-and-a-half a day as a maintenance dose, which is amazing. We've just started sesame desensitisation. And she can tolerate baked milk – so in time, if they think it's right, she may be able to have fresh milk, which will be huge for her," Ali explains.

On the work front, Ali – whose *Hollyoaks* character, Becca Dean, was killed off in 2007 – has been doing voice-overs throughout her pregnancy. She left *Doctors* in 2019 and says, "I really want to make a strong return to acting this year. I love medical dramas and would love to be in another."

This month, David, who has appeared in West End musicals including *Beautiful – The Carole King Musical* and *The Bodyguard*, will be seen in Sky Kids Original *My Friend Misty*, which is executive produced by Fearné Cotton.

He was appearing in *Mamma Mia!* in the West End when lockdown struck

dramas for *Doctor Who* and *Torchwood*. "David has such a capacity to make things happen – and I know what underpins it is wanting to care for his family all the time," says Ali.

Of course, their most important roles are as parents to their daughters. Ali – who says she always had a feeling they would have two girls and kept all of Isla's clothes for that reason – says, "I want them to go out into life strong. Isla is a confident, sensitive little girl. She knows her own mind and her own preferences, which we really do try to cultivate.

"It's maybe because of her food allergies, when we really need her to comply to rules, that I give her more leeway and choice in other areas. I try to give her as much agency as I can."

She adds, "I just feel this responsibility. It's a strange time for women – so much is possible for us, yet in some ways it feels like things are going back in time politically.

"I want both my little girls to go out into life strong and to be able to have a voice and express themselves clearly."

And in the meantime, the couple's latest arrival has brought them extra contentment. Says Ali, "We do feel like our family is complete." **OK!**

WORDS: DAWN EMERY PHOTOS: STACEY CLARKE AND KELSIE HALE STYLING: LYNNE MCKENNA AND ALSO WITH THANKS TO EMMA FROM HOME NIP & TUCK HAIR & MAKE-UP: JULIA



SCAN ME

Meet baby Isabella in our exclusive video as Ali opens up on the dramatic labour

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