



Scarce... milk

Parents panic as tot milk dries up

By DANIEL JONES

A NATIONWIDE shortage of baby milk is causing panic among parents.

Bottles of ready-made Cow & Gate and Aptamil formula are in short supply due to an issue with one of the ingredients.

Empty shelves have led to a wave of complaints on social media from worried mums and dads.

Singer Paloma Faith said she had tried Asda and Boots "to no avail" and tweeted: "The search for Aptamil ready-to-drink continues..."

A dad in London said he went to five different supermarkets but could not find milk for his baby.

The top-selling brands are both owned by Danone. A spokesman for the firm said: "We are currently experiencing low availability on ready to feed formula products."

The firm blamed "an ingredient used to prevent foaming" and recommended parents use powdered formula instead.



Plea... Mr Sharma

Summit is the 'last hope' for the Earth

By NATASHA CLARK

COP26 is our last opportunity to stop global warming, with "no second chances" to act, a Cabinet minister will warn today.

Alok Sharma will urge richer countries to pay to help poorer nations to ditch polluting coal.

And he will say 2021 is our "last hope" of sticking to strict climate goals to stop Earth from getting so hot it will transform beyond all recognition.

He will also say that his young daughters begged him to tell world leaders to act for future generations.

Mr Sharma, president of the UN summit in Glasgow in November, will say: "I have faith that world leaders will rise to the occasion and not be found wanting in their tryst with destiny."

"There are no second chances. Let's pick the planet."

His speech at a wind-farm today will mark six months until the event.

SINGER ON NEW MAN AND HER SHOCK VIDEO ABOUT DOMESTIC ABUSE

EXCLUSIVE by SHARON HENDRY

MEL B has spoken of the joy of finding love again with a man who is "different to anyone I've ever been in a relationship with before".

The 45-year-old Spice Girl, subjected to an alleged decade-long "reign of terror" in an abusive marriage, said she thought a healthy relationship would elude her for ever – until recently.

She said: "I honestly thought being in a romantic relationship again would be impossible because you get overloaded with past experiences."

"Because I'm riddled with so many trauma triggers, I couldn't be hugged or touched for a good year. If someone came too close to me my hairs would stand on end, even in regular, everyday life."

"But there is a way out of it. It takes somebody who's very kind, understanding and patient to help you out of that unwanted cycle you fear going back into. You can have a loving, caring relationship. It just takes a lot of time and a lot of trust."

"The person who enters into it with you has to understand how sensitive you are about your barriers. It's really hard for a man, especially for a man who has never been abusive to a woman. An actual man who thinks, 'How can a man do that to a woman?'"

"It's about building that foundation because for women who have been abused, the foundation is absolutely shattered. No ifs or buts about that."

'Spitting or strangulation, these things do happen'

While Mel is reluctant to identify the new love of her life, she does describe him as "kind and very, very patient".

Whoever the mystery man is, he is clearly making her happy.

Gone is the tired, worried woman I first met two years ago at a Leeds refuge, when she became patron for Women's Aid in England.

Today, on Zoom, Mel looks radiant and relaxed with sparkling eyes and a broad smile. On the whole she appears calmer, wiser and more reflective than ever.

In November 2018 she released her powerful memoir *Brutally Honest*, which detailed her life with convicted domestic abuser Stephen Belafonte, 45. She also backed *The Sun* on Sunday's successful *Save Our Shelters* campaign, which secured funding for women's refuges.

She claims film producer Belafonte, who kept his criminal record secret from her, began his reign of coercive abuse on their wedding night in 2007 and continued a decade-long "reign of terror".

She revealed how the couple appeared to enjoy a Hollywood lifestyle, yet at home she alleged Belafonte subjected her to emotional abuse, branding her ugly, a slut, fat, stupid, a bitch, worthless, drunk and pathetic.

In her book she details how, during the marriage, she was isolated from her friends and family in Leeds, and lost her self-esteem.

The woman who stood for Girl Power was driven to self-medicating with drink and drugs and attempted suicide on the eve of *The X Factor*.



GIRL POWER... on Spice World Tour '19

I'm keen to get back on the road again with the Spice Girls. I want to keep on entertaining – for ever and ever, amen



DISTRESSED... Mel chats to Sharon during a visit to a women's refuge in Leeds, 2018. Above left to right, she is attacked and looks battered and bruised in scenes from the *Love Should Not Hurt* music video



final in 2014. The couple have daughter Madison, nine.

Mel also has her marriage to dancer Jimmy Gulzar, and Angel, 14, with Eddie Murphy.

She began divorcing Belafonte in 2018 and their £10million fight played out in public in an LA court. In August 2018 they reached a settlement which involved the abuse charges being dropped.

The reason we are speaking today is because Mel has collaborated with classical composer

Fabio D'Andrea to launch an awareness-raising music video called *Love Should Not Hurt*.

Made in collaboration with Women's Aid, the video was inspired by Mel's conversations with survivors of domestic abuse and the impact of lockdown on women living with an abusive partner during the global pandemic.

An estimated 1.6million women in England and Wales experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2020, with women aged 16 to 24 at most risk.

In the video, Mel is seen living in an affluent lifestyle in a beautiful house – while behind the scenes she is being subjected to abuse.

Some brave method acting sees her being wrestled to the ground, strangled and punched. She said: "I have a responsibility to make sure

these situations are portrayed as realistically as possible. I looked at all the emails I've received from women who have read my book and handpicked some to help me with the acting."

"Whether it be the spitting or the strangulation, these are things that actually happen. They are not just my story – they are all these women's stories."

"I came out of making that video with bruises because I wanted it to be an honest representation of what we have all gone through."

"There is a bedroom scene where I am attacked, it was really important to make that real."

Mel's dramatic video release comes just two weeks after the Domestic Abuse Bill was given royal assent and made law. The Act for the first time sets out in law what domestic



I thought I'd never find love again. For a year I couldn't bear to be hugged or touched

Says MEL B

abuse is, with the definition going beyond physical violence to include emotional and sexual abuse, coercive control and economic abuse. Children are also recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right for the first time.

Mel welcomes the news. She is now settled back in her home town of Leeds, enjoying family time with mum Andrea and her girls.

She still endures emotional trauma triggered by a joint custody arrangement with Belafonte which means she is separated from daughter Madison for months at a time. She explained: "I have a child who my abuser took off me with help from the legal system."

"I FaceTime her every day but that time can either be cut short or it might not happen at all because of whatever he springs on me. I'm

living in the aftermath of what happens when you leave somebody who can still control you."

Mel is committed to making sure her daughters learn healthy relationship patterns.

She says: "All I can do is shower my kids with love and make sure they treat people how they would like to be treated."

"One thing banned in my house is yelling. If anyone wants to yell they have to go for a walk or breathe. My household was full of yelling for ten years, so my kids have just got to be able to talk. I also try to teach them about inner confidence."

"Nobody should be checking your phone or forcing you to speak. Nobody should be controlling what you wear, or how you act or when you see a friend."

This year marks 25 years since the birth of the Spice Girls – and while Mel is reluctant to reveal firm plans, she says she is keen to get back on the road to mark the occasion because the stage will always be her "happy place".

She added: "I'm always gonna be hopeful that I'm going to be entertaining. For ever and ever, amen."

But these days the loudest Spice Girl is channelling her voice in ever more powerful directions.

She says: "I want to be a Women's Aid patron until the day I die. I'll always be there flying the flag. It's not just about my experience, it's

about listening to all the other women's voices. There are still days when even a door slamming will make me jump but I remind myself that I'm not living that life and I've developed coping skills. It gets easier to deal with the pain and the shame, but you can't erase domestic abuse from your mind completely. It's one of those things that you have to live with. You have to do baby steps and then move on."

Farah Nazeer, chief executive at Women's Aid said: "We are so grateful to Melanie and Fabio D'Andrea for their dedication in creating this powerful video. We will continue to campaign to ensure that all women are protected from abuse."



DIVORCED... Mel with Stephen in 2016

women's aid

until women & children are safe. IF you are worried that your partner, or that of a friend or family member, is controlling and abusive, go to womensaid.org.uk for support and information, including Live Chat, the Survivors' Forum, The Survivor's Handbook and the Domestic Abuse Directory. Live Chat is open from 10am-6pm seven days a week for confidential expert support from specialised support workers. You can also call the freephone 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247 (run by Refuge).

Pictures: @SOMESEEDIFFERENT/WOMEN'S AID