

” you are not  
too fat ”  
to get pregnant

Improve your fertility without restrictive dieting



Carmen Mair

# **You Are Not “Too Fat” To Get Pregnant**

## **Improve your fertility without restrictive dieting**

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# Introduction



**M**onica was 12 when she first started to gain weight. Her parents simply put it down to her love for food. She was fairly active but by the time she was 17, she had reached 82 kg. It didn't seem to make too much sense that only too much food was to blame. She was incredibly self-conscious about the way she looked. Eventually, she didn't feel like going out, meeting friends, or dressing up anymore. The disgust about her body made her stay home, which spiralled her into inactivity. She assumed people would stare at her and think, "She's fat; she shouldn't be eating as much."

She developed high blood pressure, severe bloating, breathlessness, extreme fatigue throughout the day but insomnia at night, headaches, acne, and more weight gain.

Monica has also always struggled with long and irregular cycles. 18 years old and frustrated, she decided to get a proper health check. Her doctor diagnosed her with PCOS and recommended the pill to regulate her cycle. Of course, he also suggested eating less and exercising more to lose weight. He went on a lengthy lecture about the dangers of being overweight and about cutting out fried food and soft drinks. She hated the feeling that everyone assumes that an overweight person eats junk food all day long. Because she simply didn't. She had takeout every now and then, but she felt that the majority of what she ate was homemade.

Consequently, Monica went on crash diets. This is what everyone else seemed to do so it seemed a logical step. She cut out sugar, junk food, bread, and even meat from her diet and mostly ate fruits and vegetables. It seemed to work temporarily. One time she lost 12kg and shrank from 89 kg to 77 kg in just 5 weeks. She was ecstatic about the results, but the joy was short-lived.

The cravings were unbearable, her hair started to thin out, and she was more tired than ever before.

In 2019, when Monica and her husband Nick decided to get pregnant, she stopped using birth control. Of course, she knew that PCOS might make it harder to get pregnant, but she never thought she'd experience infertility.

She used ovulation predictor kits to make sure they were trying on the right days, but month after month she'd be devastated when her period came. When she finally did get pregnant, she had two miscarriages.

Monica started getting more and more anxious and asked her doctor for support. The help she received felt like a slap in her face. After some basic blood tests, he strongly recommended weight loss. He explained that her being overweight was the obvious cause of her infertility struggles and that losing some pounds would be the cure for all.

She felt incredibly frustrated, angry, helpless, and absolutely devastated. She had tried to lose weight so many times, but it simply didn't work. At least not in the long run. They kept trying, but the pandemic made things worse. Staying at home did take a toll on Monica and Nick's eating and lifestyle habits. Monica gained more weight and felt the worst she had ever felt. To make matters worse, sex quickly became a chore for both of them. In the process, her sexual drive seemed to have disappeared.

Then Monica found me. We looked at her symptoms, her habits, her blood work and came up with a programme that suited her lifestyle. When working the programme, she started to see daily bowel movements for the first time ever. It was like a little miracle when she saw her period start after a 35-day cycle. Eventually, she felt like her body was in its natural rhythm. Monica told me that it was insane how quickly she noticed changes in her mood and energy. When she finally saw these 2 red lines after 7 months of turning her health around, her eyes filled with tears. Monica and Nick welcomed their little baby boy last year and are already thinking about baby number 2.

This book is for every woman who has felt the heavy burden of infertility and struggled with her weight. It is a guide to help you navigate the emotional and physical challenges, and to empower you with practical tools, evidence-based strategies, and heartfelt encouragement. It is a testament to the resilience and strength of women who refuse to be defined by a number on a scale, but instead, choose to believe in their worth and ability to create the family they long for.

Are you ready to embark on a journey of self-discovery, empowerment, and renewed hope? Let's unlock the path to motherhood together, beyond the scale.

# Let's Begin Your Journey...



**Y**our body is a sacred vessel, a home for your breath, your mind, and your soul.

From now onwards, I'd like you to treat your body like the sacred container that it is. Stop chasing an unrealistic beauty ideal made up by a male designer who doesn't want to spend the money for enough fabric to cover a normal female body.

Overweight receives the blame for everything these days. Being overweight is easy to blame, especially when you cannot conceive. However, fertility is a complex dance between the hormones that trigger ovulation and goes far beyond weight. There are many root causes that are responsible for hormonal imbalances that lead to infertility. Instead of blaming yourself or your body, let's dig deeper and uncover the true underlying causes of your infertility struggles.

I believe that being overweight is not the cause of infertility but rather just another symptom of an underlying root cause. The root cause is most likely responsible for infertility and also for difficulties losing weight.

Addressing the root cause will improve fertility and most likely also trigger weight loss as a simple byproduct.

Your body doesn't betray you.

Your body works tremendously well.

Symptoms are your body's signal that something isn't quite right within.

Symptoms are your body's way of communicating with you and asking for help.

If your body doesn't receive help, it helps itself by shutting down step-by-step things that aren't necessary for its own survival.

Offspring is great to have, but your body will put you first.

Bye-bye fertility.

However, your body has the innate ability to heal itself.

Given the right tools, you can restore it to its former glory.

It probably isn't your fault that things went wrong within your reproductive system. However, it is your responsibility to give your body the right tools to heal.

You have the right and the power to heal.

You can heal your fertility. You can improve your fertility and lose weight. Right in this order but not the other way around.

It doesn't work the other way around; otherwise, you wouldn't read these pages. So let's go together on the journey to make you fertile again.

As you embark on this journey, remember to be gentle with yourself. Your body is doing its best, and so are you. Embrace self-compassion and self-care as you navigate the challenges of infertility and weight. Your body is not the enemy, but a miraculous vessel capable of incredible things. Trust in its wisdom and capacity to heal.

# You Don't Want To Just Get Pregnant



**Y**ou actually do NOT want to get pregnant.

You want to carry your baby to term and become the mother of a healthy, breathing newborn!

Why does this make a difference?

Let's say you manage to get your shit together for a couple of months, lose a bit of weight, and by chance, get pregnant. What's next? For how long can you sustain that healthier lifestyle and not go crazy over the foods you've denied yourself for such a long time?

When these pregnancy cravings set in, how much willpower do you have left to abstain from all the cakes, chips, crisps, hamburgers, chocolates, etc., etc. to nourish your body and baby for a healthy pregnancy? How much willpower is left to minimise the risk of miscarriage and gestational diabetes before you say, "Fuck it, I'm pregnant now; let's indulge?"

Right, not too much, if any.

Some of you reading this book may have lost a tonne of weight but still not seen a positive pregnancy test. Maybe you've had miscarriages. One of the reasons may be that the toxins stored in your body have led to impairments in the finely tuned interrelation between energy metabolism and reproduction, thereby affecting your fertility.

It is not about your weight! It never has been, and it never will be. It is about your health.

Repeat after me: This whole journey is about my health!

Do you think your child will be happy about you jumping on the scales and reaching your goal weight?

Exactly; it won't give a shit about that.

On the contrary, think about your child's happy face when mum and dad are playing an hour of soccer, dancing around the house with ease, or jumping on the trampoline (if your pelvic floor will let you do jumping after delivering a baby, but let's keep that story for another time, shall we?).

Do you think it will bring your child joy to see you struggling with daily activities and huffing and puffing going up the stairs?

Think about all the laughter when you've chased them. Think about you two running up and down the escalator the wrong way because it's so much fun.

Can you do this right now?

This is why I say, "Fuck the weight, but make it about your health."

Let's swear together: FUCK my weight. Fuck it. My health is what matters. MY HEALTH. End of story.

But it is not just about your health. It is also about the health of your unborn child. From now onwards you are responsible for both.

# A Little Bit About Myself...



**I**t leaves marks on a person's soul when you grow up in a household where destructive behaviour, a lack of support, and constant fear are present. These marks may heal with time and effort, but they usually leave scars.

I was privileged to be born in West Germany in 1979. I grew up in a peaceful and economically rich country. However, my parents seemed to be quite unhappy with all the peace around them. Peace and contentment are not for everyone, so they created lots of drama at home. I remember many times when my sister and I lay fearful in our beds because the yelling and screaming didn't seem to find an end. My father was strict and often unforgiving, and he also showed no interest whatsoever in us kids. My mother was either submissive towards my father or persistently nagging and complaining. She also wasn't really interested in us kids. Today, I know that this is all easily explainable given both of their own childhood experiences. Of course, as a child, one isn't able to rationalise their parents behaviours, so I was constantly seeking love and approval. I received neither very often.

I've learned early on that showing my feelings, or, God forbid, making demands and getting my needs met, isn't anything that brings me love or approval. For me, it was best to be quiet, dig my head in to be invisible, be always friendly, pleasing, and giving, and read body language and energies to quickly adjust my own actions. I've turned into a little chameleon that is able to figure out within split seconds how people around me feel and what they need to be comfortable, and then I act accordingly. I deserve an award for my endless repertoire of excellent performances.

Unfortunately, being busy pleasing everyone around me, I forgot to look after myself. To be honest, I didn't even know that I had the right to have my own needs, express them, and ask others to fulfil them. To this day I struggle to ask for help or to express my feelings, let alone feel them. Sometimes I can't even tell you what I feel. I have mastered the skill of suppressing myself and my emotions. I have become so good at it that even today, after all

the massive healing work I've done, at times I don't know what exactly I feel in the given moment.

However, nowadays I am aware of what I am doing and take my time to let my emotions unfold. I sit with it. I literally do. I sit on a chair and just feel. I have to. Because if I don't feel them, the emotions stick around and lead to the return of all my coping mechanisms. I don't want to say that they are unhealthy strategies because, at the time, these coping mechanisms did a great job of keeping me safe throughout my "special" childhood.

On the contrary, in adulthood, these coping mechanisms don't serve me very well. I've learned the hard way that suppressing emotions doesn't make them disappear. They're all still there, lingering around, locked away somewhere in your body, and they're keeping knocking on the door to get out. For a long time, I didn't want to let them out. I ignored the knocking. When the knocking got louder, I came up with more coping mechanisms. I couldn't possibly feel the pain or all the anger, frustration, and sadness bottled up in me. I didn't want to feel pain. All humans avoid pain and seek pleasure, and I'm no different.

In all of my relationships, I put myself last. I've made the biggest effort to be no effort. Never nag; be pleasant; be nice; and be the perfect girlfriend. Then I've become the perfect wife. Twice. In between, I did a bit of therapy, but nobody was pointing out what I was doing to myself. The therapists were great at pointing out the obvious: my childhood might not have been ideal, and my parents are to blame. No shit. But then what do you do with that information?

For as long as I can remember, I also had physical ailments, ranging from severe constipation to a belly that blew up like a balloon and the worst skin one can imagine. My face wasn't that bad, but the rest of my body was covered in little bumps and pimples. In my early twenties, I was diagnosed with hypothyroidism, and heart palpitations started bothering me. My nose seemed to be always runny, my hair thinned, my nails were brittle, and I was constantly cold, even in summer. I cannot tell you how good or bad my periods were because I took the pill from age 15 onward, all the way up to age 30. You don't have a period when on hormonal birth control but a withdrawal bleed. Nobody ever mentioned that this might not be the best idea. My gynaecologist simply gave me a prescription for six months, and that was it. I cannot tell you how much damage 15 years of suppressing my hormones did, but with all the knowledge I have now, I'm sure it didn't do my health any favour.

My belly constantly filled up with air; that was in my eyes my biggest problem at the time. I'm not proud of what I'm about to write, but the entry into my journey to health was paved by pure vanity. I hated my belly, and I tried everything to get rid of it. I got obsessed with a flat stomach. I figured it had to be the food I eat, but I couldn't tell what it was. Mind you, in 2000, the internet had just started to take off and information wasn't as readily available as it is

today. The doctors gave me the wildest diagnosis. IBS was a popular diagnosis. "I don't know"... another one. One doctor did an ultrasound and came to the "intelligent" conclusion that I must have gas in my stomach and intestines. I came to the conclusion that he wasted lots of time on his medical studies. I wasn't sure if I should laugh or cry at that moment. It took almost 10 years of millions of doctor's appointments, two endoscopies, and a colonoscopy to finally receive the diagnosis of coeliac disease.

I was crazy enough to be happy about the diagnosis, believing all my pain and agony would be over. Straight away, I went strictly gluten-free, expecting my stomach to deflate in an instant. But it didn't. Yes, it got a little better. Some days I wasn't as bloated anymore. On the majority of days, I continued to look like I was six months pregnant. The damn constipation was still there, my skin issues didn't fully resolve, I was always tired, my nails and hair were shittier than ever, etc., etc.

I gave up going to doctors and went to naturopaths, healers, nutritionists, herbalists, and God knows who else I saw. I was desperate to the point I listened a medical medium and followed his advice, explanations and cure for all illnesses for quite a while.

Over the years, I've numbed myself with cigarettes (I smoked like a chimney) and coffee. At some point, I started to use food as a remedy for my emotional pain. I regularly deprived myself of literally everything, so I slipped slowly but steadily into a cycle of bingeing and severe restriction. I wanted my body to get better, but my mental health kept me from doing the right thing consistently. I was very good for a while and really bad for another while. I cycled between healing my gut and letting myself completely go when my bucket of willpower was empty. Periods of extreme control were followed by periods of extreme letting go of all rules.

I spiralled slowly but steadily into an eating disorder. Especially sweet food was the numbing drug of my choice. My comfort zone. The substance that gave me relief filled the huge void and the emptiness within me and gave me a feeling of fullness. I could eat myself into a food coma, not being able to move and feeling only discomfort. The binge came with disgust, shame, guilt, and remorse. And these feelings never really left me. The people around me never got to see the real me. They just saw a self-disciplined Carmen, who carried a salad for lunch around, but never the woman who sat in front of a Nutella glass, holding a spoon, and about to empty that whole thing in one go. Mind you, I didn't finish the binge after that one glass. There was always more. It seemed just logical to keep going when I'd ruined my diet already.

It took me a very long time to figure out that I have a problem and need help. You cannot eat your emotions away. Trust me, I've tried very hard.

I had to learn to get in touch with my inner self and my feelings and take responsibility for my own actions now and then. Feeling sorry for myself and blaming my childhood for my misery didn't get me anywhere near a healthy relationship with myself, the people around me, or my relationship with food. I had to learn to let the past be the past, look at my triggers in the now and then, and take action accordingly. Was that easy? No. I thought the pain would kill me. Surprisingly, it didn't. I'm still here. I've learned that it's okay to feel pain. It's ok to be me, and nothing bad happens if I am me. It has been a long journey. Am I cured? Well, physically, I am as healthy and fit as I've ever been in my whole life. Mentally, I still have plenty of growth ahead of me, and I'm looking forwards to it even though I know it might not always be smooth sailing.

Along the way, I've decided to become qualified. I wanted to help others who had also been mistreated by medical professionals. Often, women were telling me how they'd been literally gaslighted by their doctors, especially when they were overweight. Their refusal to look beyond weight is astonishing and leaves big question marks. How much judgement can an infertile, already broken woman face?

Infertility is the most devastating experience one can go through. A woman's pain when she is struggling to conceive is beyond measurement. How a doctor can decide to send an overweight woman away, stating she's simply too fat to get pregnant, without offering more help is impossible to understand.

Because of all the ignorant so-called professionals, I studied nutrition and health coaching and decided to specialise in fertility. So here we are. Enough about me; let's begin to make it about you and you alone.

# Possible Consequences of Poor Prenatal Nutrition



**Y**ou are what you eat—and so is your baby!

You may have had a hard time eating nutritious food. You know you should eat well. I'm sure you also know that a balanced diet does not mean varying the flavours of the chocolate bars you eat.

I mean, I get it. It's hard to change, and you probably feel guilty for those indulgences.

Unfortunately, there can be real consequences if you don't take good care of your body and fuel it with great nutrients. To be clear, there is no blame or shame here. It is a simple fact that the food we put into our mouths has consequences for our health.

For years I have made the most terrible food choices myself. I blamed myself a lot for that and felt guilt, shame, and remorse. Unfortunately, these feelings made me choose more crap to make me feel better. It's a vicious cycle.

Poor prenatal nutrition will affect the placenta, which is the organ that sustains a baby's life in the womb. It can lead to the perineum not being as flexible and elastic as it needs to be for labour, which can cause significant tears during the birth.

Poor food choices and inadequate nutrient intake increase the chances of pregnancy discomforts such as morning sickness, constipation, fatigue, muscle cramps, and heartburn. It can lead to gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, toxemia, or pre-eclampsia. This is a life-threatening condition that can result in high blood pressure, convulsions, and even death. I could go on, but I think you get the point.

You don't want to only lose weight. You want to make it about your own well-being and your baby's health.

Of course, many people believe that you have a greater chance of getting pregnant and having a healthy baby if you are close to a healthy weight.

Maybe your doctor has refused fertility treatment before you shed some pounds.

I am asking you:

If being overweight is the true cause of infertility, why can you see other women who have an equal or even greater problem with their weight with a baby in their arms?

Why can they happily push their prams down the street, and you still haven't had a double line on the pregnancy test?

Why can they conceive with all this fat on their bodies and you can't?

# What Is A Healthy Weight?



- The weight you are comfortable with.
- The weight that allows you to move your body easily without feeling fatigued.
- The weight your unique body type is designed to carry.
- The weight in which you can love yourself unconditionally.

**M**edical professionals often use the BMI (body mass index) to measure your health. The BMI takes your height and puts it in relation to your weight.

The BMI is extremely misleading. It does not take into account the person's body fat versus muscle (lean tissue) content. Muscle weighs more than fat.

Therefore, if you've exercised and have accumulated a lot of muscle throughout the years and weigh a lot as a result, your BMI will inevitably classify you as fatter than you really are.

A 1.80-metre-tall Olympic 100-metre sprinter weighing 90kg has a BMI of 26. The BMI would classify him as being overweight, although he doesn't have an ounce of fat on his body.

And there is another reason why the BMI doesn't reflect health. I'd like to use myself as an example of this.

BMI = kg/m<sup>2</sup>

My height is 1.63 m, and I weigh 54 kg. This means my BMI is 20.32 and considered healthy.

But years ago, I was far from healthy. I had hypothyroidism, heart palpitations, acne all over my body, dry skin, hair loss, sinus issues, memory loss, problems with concentration, severe bloating and constipation, fatigue, and the list goes on.

I was thin, but my body was fucked.

# What Causes Being Overweight?



I'd like to make things as simply as possible.

We gain weight/ fat when we consume more calories than we burn.

Yes, the old calorie in versus calorie out is the secret to weight gain or loss.

'But what about hormones, Carmen? What about PCOS? I've really tried everything, but I cannot lose weight! I hardly eat anything, how can this be too much and over my body's energy needs?'

I hear you loud and clear.

Let me explain how you might have ended up in this mess.

First, please understand that it's not your fault that you're eating "too much".

It's your brain's and your gut's fault. And these two screw up the rest.

# Why Do We Eat Too Much?



**Y**ou might think you're in charge of what you want, when you want it, and when to stop. But we have a lot less control than we think. Behind every decision-making process are subconscious forces we're not aware of.

Humans eat for two reasons:

- We eat and drink to get the energy our body needs.
- We eat for pleasure or to manage our emotions.

Hunger and eating is influenced by many factors like .

- social cues
- learned behaviour
- environmental factors
- circadian rhythm
- our hormones

The hormone ghrelin is released by your stomach when it is empty. It is signalling your brain that it is time to eat. You will become hungrier as more ghrelin circulates. Unfortunately, sugar and high-fructose corn syrup can impair ghrelin's decline after eating. Results of studies have shown that ghrelin levels (and therefore your hunger levels) can be increased by chronic stress.

On the other hand, slow burning carbohydrates such as vegetables, as well as proteins like chicken and fish, can decrease ghrelin levels, which means they keep you feeling fuller for longer.

# Why Do We Stop Eating?



**T**he reasons we stop eating are influenced by our perception of fullness.

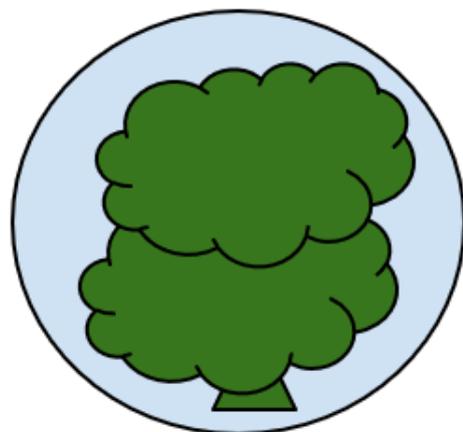
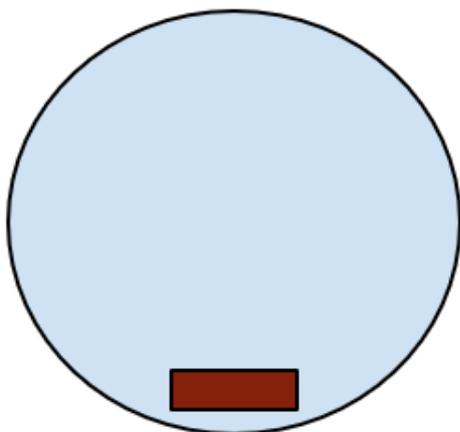
When we eat food, two physiological factors work together to tell us to put down our cutlery: gastric distension and hormonal satiation.

## **Gastric distension**

Your stomach can stretch tremendously, from holding 50 mL when empty to up to 1000 mL (or at the extreme end, 4000 mL). Your stomach tells your brain via the vagus nerve (which runs from your head to your abdomen) about how much stretching is happening.

What do you think stretches out your stomach more? Is it a tiny chocolate bar or two heads of broccoli? Of course, the broccoli takes up more stomach space.

Both have the approximate same calories. However, broccoli can help us feel fuller even though we're eating the same amount of calories.



## **Hormonal satiation**

While we eat, our gastrointestinal tract and other organs tell our brain that food is coming in.

Different macronutrients trigger different hormones that trigger different responses.

- Fat and protein trigger the gut to release cholecystinin (CCK) which travels up the vagus nerve and tells your brain to stop eating. This is why it's so important to eat protein and fat at each meal.
- A plant-based meal releases GLP-1 and amylin and enhances the suppression of food intake. This is why it's so important to eat your veggies.
- When we eat carbohydrates and proteins we release insulin. It helps your body use sugar for the energy it needs, and then store the rest in fat cells. Consistently overconsuming carbohydrates may eventually lead to your cells stopping to respond to insulin, a condition called insulin resistance. This is why it's so important to eat simple carbohydrates in moderation.
- Soluble fibre, especially from vegetables, nuts, and seeds, has been shown to increase insulin sensitivity and therefore decrease insulin levels. This is why it's so important to eat carbohydrates high in fibre.

Leptin is released by your fat cells and tells your brain when your body has had enough energy and can start burning fat to create energy.

Many of these hormonal messages stay within your body for longer and could tell you to eat less later, too. A high-carb meal for breakfast might make you feel hungry after a couple of hours, but a high-protein breakfast might prevent you from overindulging at lunch.

As mentioned above, the hormone leptin informs your brain about the amount of energy you've consumed but also how much excess energy you have stored up as fat. Logically, the more body fat you have, the more leptin is in your blood.

Under normal circumstances, high levels of leptin decrease your appetite and signal your body that it is OK to start burning fat for energy. Low levels indicate that fat stores are low and that you need to eat more. But what about abnormal circumstances?

When you override your hunger cues for a long period of time and overeat consistently, especially with chemically loaded "junk foods" without any real nutrients, you might develop a condition called leptin resistance.

Leptin resistance can cause the brain to think that you still need more energy and let you keep eating even though your fat stores are full. You feel hungry all the time, and regular portion sizes are no longer satisfying.

There is a reason for me constantly preaching that consistency beats perfection. Your body remembers what you do all of the time. It is also fairly forgiving of temporary overindulgence.

The food you eat consistently can change your brain-positively or negatively.

Eating hyper palatable food all the time will make you end up feeling less satisfied and want to eat more of the poison that destroys your body. And if this isn't enough, as a result, your body even fights you to hold on to the weight you've gained.

HELPFUL THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- eat protein and fat at each meal
- eat plenty of vegetables
- eat carbohydrates in moderation
- eat carbohydrates high in fiber
- consistency beats perfection

# The Foods That Makes Your Hormones And Brain Go Cuckoo



**I**n order to get pregnant, your body requires oestrogen and progesterone to be in perfect balance.

What we put into our bodies has a direct effect on this delicate balance. When the balance is disrupted, it may affect ovulation and, therefore, your chances of getting pregnant in a negative way.

Some foods influence our hormonal balance more than others. Unfortunately, these are the foods you most likely like the most.

Of course, we eat more of the foods we like. A lot of overeating, maybe all of it, is based on consuming some of our most palatable foods, which always come in the form of fat combined with sugar.

## **SUGAR AND FAT - a deadly pleasure trap**

Sugar and fat trick the brain into wanting more food. Extremely sweet or fatty foods have a similar effect on the brain's reward system as cocaine and gambling do.

Our biology is to blame. Sugar and fat are our body's energy sources. Sugar helps you to quickly run away from a lion, and fat helps you to survive the long winter months without much food.

Indulging in sweet and fatty foods whenever they were available was a matter of survival.

Interestingly, nature doesn't often mix sugar and fat in high amounts. It's either high in sugar or high in fat, but not both.

How good can it be for us if it's not available in its natural form?

The food industry is like any other business. It's interested in making a profit. How do you make more profit? You have to sell more. How do you sell more? You find ways to make people want your product more.

Combining sugar and fat in one single product is like a magic trick. The food industry literally hooked you.

Eating the addictive sugar and fat combination brings you an intense feeling of pleasure. Think about it: What makes your mouth water—the thought of a tablespoon of pure table sugar, the thought of a tablespoon of pure butter vs. a tablespoon of delicious cheesecake or a fork filled with french fries?

The sugar and fat combination is much more appealing to us and creates hyperpalatable foods—an addict's nightmare.

Like any other drug, frequent overconsumption saturates the brain with so much dopamine that it eventually adapts by desensitising itself. Consequently, the brain demands more sugar and fat to reach the same threshold of pleasure as it once experienced with smaller amounts of the same food.

It's not easy to stay away from hyperpalatable foods. I know this because I ate lunch at McDonald's for years and know how tasty the food can be for someone who isn't used to the taste of "real" food.

Now I wouldn't touch it for a million bucks. The thought alone disgusts me. I've trained my brain to be repulsed by this type of crap.

You can do the same.

Yes, I call it crap or rubbish that doesn't belong in my body. Because my body is not a rubbish bin and wants to be treated with respect. Filling it constantly with fast food is disrespectful to myself, and I deserve better. You deserve better.

Back to leptin and insulin.

Normally, the two hormones leptin and insulin suppress the release of dopamine and reduce the sense of pleasure as a meal continues. With overconsumption of calories comes increased fatty tissue in your body, and the brain stops responding to these hormones. If you keep eating these foods, your threshold for pleasure keeps going up, so your brain demands more of the foods that keep it flooded with dopamine.

It's not exactly understood why this happens. It seems that too much energy from hyperpalatable foods, foods that combine sugar and fat in high amounts, is causing inflammation within the brain.

Research suggests that significant consumption of the humanly engineered food changes gut bacteria. This affects the gut-to-brain pathway and therefore can also cause inflammation.

Please understand that the food industry doesn't care much about your health unless they can make money with it. They care about profit.

To make matters worse, marketers within the department of "tricking innocent people into buying shit nobody needs" came up with highly effective brainwashing techniques.

For example, they invented new eating times like snack time. This is the time to eat food to energise you or make you happier. I remember a German advertisement that encouraged you to eat Knoppers (a crunchy chocolate bar) at 9.30 am. The ad showed stressed-looking workers staring at the clock. At 9.30 am, you could see the lid up and happy faces holding Knoppers in their hands.

In the film industry, food is used to portray temptation, happiness, and self-love. In Hollywood movies, you see women burying their heartbreak into ice cream and chocolate.

It's not just the food or film industry that teaches you bad eating habits.

It usually starts at home with rules made by well-intentioned parents. Mine told me that if I don't finish my plate, the sun won't shine. They forced me to eat even though I was physically full. It makes sense if you understand that my parents grew up after the war with parents who lived through times of scarcity. Eat it when it's available. But getting into the habit of cleaning your plate makes it more likely that you will consistently overeat and ignore your feelings of fullness.

Your gut and your brain are in constant dialogue. Research on mice found out that gut microbes influence what we choose to eat. These microbes sort of feed on sugar and make substances that alleviate cravings for different kinds of foods so they can eat.

Obviously nobody likes starvation, not even these little microbes. When they are hungry because you took away their food, they will subsequently make you want to eat more of the food that feeds them—sugar. When you cut out sugar, the cravings might feel unbearable because something in your gut is literally dying of starvation.

See, you are not a weak idiot without self-control.

A healthy child never overeats natural foods and will eat the right amount for their bodies, growth, and development. But advertising, highly palatable and addictive foods, our gut bacteria, our beliefs formed as children and social pressure let us override our natural instincts.

You are being manipulated.

The good news is: It's not your fault.

The bad news is: Now that you know it, it's your responsibility to do something about it.

#### HELPFUL THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Your hormonal balance depends on what you eat.
- Eating natural foods and having a healthy mindset bring back the natural STOP signals.

# Possible Causes of Female Infertility



**M**ale infertility: First things first, in at least half of all cases, it's the man... So for heaven's sake, before you bend yourself backwards, please send him to the doctor's office. Send him now and come back to this book when he's in the clear.

There are many reasons, including structural abnormalities of the uterus, which unfortunately cannot be controlled by your own actions.

This book will take a look at the causes influenced by diet and lifestyle, which therefore can be influenced by you.

Poor gut health: Feeding bad bacteria in your gut can lead to alterations in your gut microbiome diversity, which can reduce or increase the activity of enzymes, resulting in lower or higher levels of oestrogen and hormonal imbalance. This may be enough to lead to disruptions in your menstrual cycle, creating irregular periods and impaired ovulation, and therefore negatively affecting your fertility.

Insulin resistance: Prolonged elevated blood sugar levels shift the sex hormone balance to promote testosterone production over oestrogen production. This often causes women to ovulate irregularly or not at all, which can result in infertility.

Thyroid dysfunction: Thyroid hormones can have significant effects on reproduction and pregnancy. There is a known association of hyper- and hypothyroidism with menstrual disturbances and decreased fertility. Being overweight can be a sign of hypothyroidism. On the contrary, being underweight can be a sign of hyperthyroidism. This book will only touch on hypothyroidism, as the book is dedicated to women struggling with being overweight.

Inflammation: Inflammation is the body's attempt to protect itself against infections, irritants, and damaged cells. It's contributing to reproductive dysfunction, including several common

causes of infertility such as PCOS, endometriosis, pelvic inflammatory disease, and recurrent miscarriages.

**Stress/Trauma:** Research has found that women with higher levels of day-to-day stress have lower odds of getting pregnant by 29%. Elevated cortisol inhibits the production of and creates resistance to sex hormones. Exposure to childhood stressors is associated with diminished ovarian reserve and function.

**Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS):** PCOS is a hormonal disorder that can cause irregular periods, ovarian cysts, and an overproduction of insulin. Struggling to lose weight is commonly associated with PCOS, and it can exacerbate the hormonal imbalances that lead to infertility.

**Oestrogen Dominance:** Your body needs oestrogen for bone, cardiovascular, and reproductive health. Oestrogen dominance refers to a hormonal imbalance in which the levels of estrogen in the body are relatively higher compared to other hormones, such as progesterone. This imbalance can disrupt the delicate hormonal interplay necessary for reproductive health and potentially contribute to infertility. Excessive estrogen levels can interfere with the regularity of ovulation, disrupt the maturation and release of eggs, affect the quality of cervical mucus, and impair the ability of the uterine lining to support implantation and pregnancy.

**MTHFR genetic variations:** MTHFR may cause a folate deficiency and could increase homocysteine, neither of which are good for conception.

**Nutritional deficiencies:** Poor intake of proteins, micro- and macrominerals, and vitamins alters the energy and hormonal balance within the body and may lead to decreased reproductive performance.

**Coeliac disease:** Women with undiagnosed coeliac disease had 11 more miscarriages per 1,000 pregnancies and 1.62 more stillbirths per 1,000 pregnancies.

**Exposure to environmental toxins:** Environmental toxins can potentially damage sperm, eggs, and even the developing foetus.

**Excessive consumption of alcohol, recreational drugs, cigarettes, and caffeine:** Let's not talk about the obvious, shall we?

**A combination of some of the causes above:** Most likely, your struggles to conceive are caused by more than just one root cause. In my experience, usually a woman gets hit with a few of the causes mentioned above and needs to address all of them.

# Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)



**P**olycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a hormonal disorder that affects the ovaries and can cause irregular menstrual cycles, ovarian cysts, and an overproduction of insulin. Insulin resistance, a condition where the body becomes less responsive to insulin, is commonly associated with PCOS. Insulin resistance can disrupt the normal hormonal balance in the body, leading to imbalances in reproductive hormones and difficulties with ovulation, which can result in infertility. I will elaborate further on this topic in the next chapter.

PCOS is a complex condition and can present in different ways in different individuals. There are four main types of PCOS that have been identified based on clinical and hormonal characteristics:

1. **Insulin-resistant PCOS:** This is the most common type of PCOS and is associated with insulin resistance. I still have to meet the woman with PCOS regardless of her weight, who doesn't have insulin resistance. Insulin resistance can lead to elevated insulin levels in the bloodstream, which can disrupt the normal hormonal balance in the body and result in irregular menstrual cycles, weight gain, and other PCOS-related symptoms. This type of PCOS is often associated with excess weight.
2. **Post-pill PCOS:** Some women may develop PCOS-like symptoms after discontinuing the use of hormonal birth control pills. This can be due to the body taking time to readjust to its natural hormonal balance after being on hormonal contraceptives for an extended period of time. It is generally a temporary form of PCOS and typically resolves on its own within a few months.
3. **Inflammatory PCOS:** Inflammation in the body can disrupt hormonal balance and contribute to the development of PCOS. Inflammatory PCOS is characterized by

increased levels of inflammation markers in the blood and can be associated with other conditions such as metabolic syndrome or autoimmune disorders.

4. Adrenal PCOS: Also known as adrenal hyperplasia-related PCOS or non-classic adrenal hyperplasia, is a rare subtype of PCOS that is associated with adrenal gland dysfunction. The adrenal glands are small glands located above the kidneys that produce hormones, including cortisol and androgens (male hormones). In adrenal PCOS, there is an overproduction of androgens from the adrenal glands, which can disrupt hormonal balance in the body and result in PCOS-related symptoms. Adrenal PCOS is typically caused by a genetic mutation that affects the enzymes involved in the production of cortisol and other hormones in the adrenal glands. This can result in an excess production of androgens, which can interfere with normal ovulation and menstrual cycles, leading to irregular periods, ovarian cysts, and other PCOS symptoms. Symptoms of adrenal PCOS may include irregular menstrual cycles, acne, hirsutism (excess hair growth), androgenic alopecia (male-pattern hair loss), and other signs of androgen excess. Unlike other types of PCOS, women with adrenal PCOS may not always have insulin resistance or obesity as prominent features, although they can still occur in some cases.

It's important to note that not all individuals with PCOS will neatly fit into one of these categories, and there may be overlap or variations in symptoms and hormonal imbalances among women.

Diet and lifestyle changes can be highly effective in managing PCOS-related infertility because they can help address the underlying hormonal imbalances and insulin resistance.

It's important to note that diet and lifestyle changes may not be effective for everyone, and treatment plans should be individualized based on each person's unique circumstances. However, the following program is designed to improve insulin sensitivity and lowering inflammation and stress levels. These three steps combined tackle most of the underlying causes of PCOS.

# Insulin Resistance and Infertility



**I**nsulin is a hormone made in the pancreas. Its job is to help move glucose from your blood into your cells. Glucose comes from the food we eat.

Our body needs glucose for energy.

Usually, our body does not use all of this energy at once. This is why insulin takes the glucose we don't need immediately, brings it to the cell, and stores it there. When we need it, it releases glucose as necessary.

After you eat, glucose goes into the bloodstream, and therefore blood sugar rises. It tends to peak about an hour after eating, and if insulin is doing its job, blood sugar levels decline after that.

Here is the problem: If your blood gets constantly flooded by a tonne of glucose, at some point your cells turn around and say, "I'm full. I don't want any more glucose. Do whatever you want with it, but I'm not taking it anymore. Enough is enough."

When your cells don't respond anymore, they have become resistant to insulin.

In insulin resistance, the body asks the pancreas to make more and more insulin, which is simply an attempt to control rising blood sugars. If one doesn't make an effort to reverse or manage the resistance, over time, the pancreas can become less effective at making insulin. Eventually, this leads to rising blood sugars, prediabetes, and diabetes.

Insulin resistance is a key driver for infertility.

The association of insulin resistance with reproductive pathology has been well documented. Researchers have found that women and men with elevated blood sugar and insulin resistance are at greater risk for fertility challenges. This may result in a longer time to get pregnant, a higher chance of miscarriage, and a higher risk for birth defects.

Research shows that excess insulin creates an imbalance in our sex hormones. It may promote testosterone production over oestrogen production, inhibit ovulation, and compromise egg quality. Unfortunately, this may lead to delayed embryonic development, growth restriction of the foetus, and birth defects.

Even without looking at any studies, it appears logical. Our bodily functions are controlled by hormones. If one hormone is out of whack, the others have to counterbalance the whole system in order to keep going and stay alive.

Reproduction isn't necessary to stay alive. Your body knows that there are far more important organs to worry about to keep you going. This means that your body always picks YOU over your offspring. ALWAYS. Reproduction is not your body's priority.

Some signs of insulin resistance include

- A waist-to-hip ratio over 0.95 in men and 0.81 cm in women
- Blood pressure readings of 130/80 or higher
- A fasting glucose level over 100 mg/dL or 5.6 mmol/L
- A fasting triglyceride level over 150 mg/dL or 1.7 mmol/L
- Skin tags
- Patches of dark, velvety skin called acanthosis nigricans

To be sure you have insulin resistance, your doctor would need to run a number of tests.

However, there are two tools you can safely use at home and they might be a good indicator of insulin resistance:

1. Waist-to-hip-ratio
2. Fasted blood glucose levels

Combined, these tools can be used to determine whether your insulin is sensitive or resistant.

# Waist-To-Hip Ratio - An Indicator of Health



**T**wo people with the same height and weight can have very different health statuses.

We need to look at the places where fat is stored.

Fat stored in the waist area indicates the prevalence of visceral fat, the dangerous internal fat that coats the organs. This means the fat you cannot necessarily see.

Visceral fat matters very much in terms of metabolic function and cardiovascular risk.

Visceral fat is the fat you need to worry about.

Visceral fat is the fat you want to get rid of.

We already know to not worry about BMI. A better way to measure your health status and therefore your fertility is the Waist-to-Hip Ratio.

The waist-to-hip ratio can be used to indicate susceptibility to a number of health issues, including high blood pressure, heart disease, insulin resistance, and therefore your hormonal balance, which then leads to a negative impact on your fertility.

Research shows that a high waist-to-hip ratio level is associated with insulin resistance markers in normal-weight women.

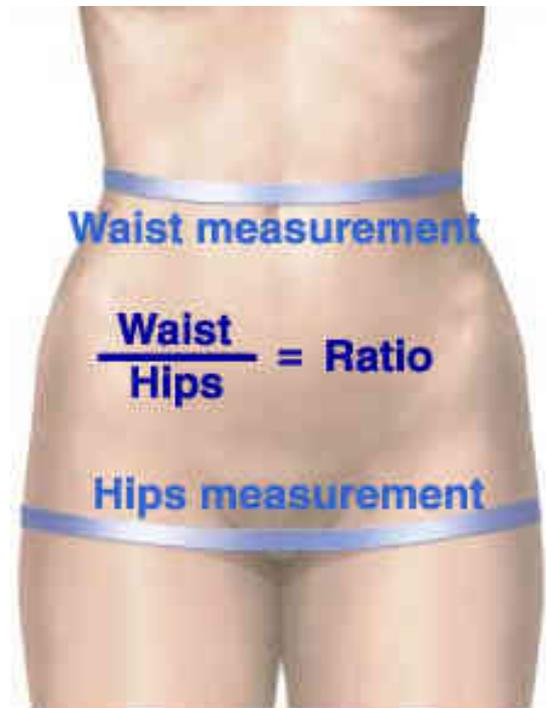
Why is this important?

Because insulin resistance is highly likely to impact your fertility. Obviously, not in a good way.

Before I started my health journey, my measurements looked like this: waist 79 cm, hips 91cm = WHR 0.86. This was a clear indication of insulin resistance despite being within the "healthy" BMI range.

## How to measure

Using a tape measure, measure your natural waistline when breathing out and then take a reading from the widest part of your hips first thing in the morning in a fasted state. The tape should be snug around the body but not pulled so tight that it is constricting.



Source: <https://www.katsonga.com/>

Now divide the circumference of your waist by your hip circumference measurement and compare it to the chart below.

Waist circumference / hip circumference = waist-to-hip ratio

Example calculation for a female body:

Waist circumference: 75cm

Hip circumference: 90 cm

$75 / 90 = 0.83$

In this example, the waist-to-hip ratio is 0.83, which means it can be an indicator for insulin resistance no matter your age.

## Waist-to-hip ratio chart

Health risk	Women	Men
low	0.80 or lower	0.95 or lower
moderate	0.81-0.85	0.96-1.0
high	0.86 or higher	1.0 or higher

## Fasted Blood Glucose

How do you know if you have too much glucose swimming around in your blood?

Your doctor may use a fasted blood sugar test, a glycosylated haemoglobin (HbA1c) test, or a conventional blood sugar test. This test measures how the body manages blood sugar over time, usually the last 2–3 months. You will have to undergo this test at a doctor's office or in a laboratory.

You can also test your blood sugar levels at home.

You will need a blood glucose monitor and test strips for this. They are available at any pharmacy.

Measure your fasting blood sugar immediately upon waking and before you have anything to eat or drink.

You could test your blood sugar before eating, 1 hour after a meal, and 2 hours after a meal, which is when blood sugar should return to normal levels. It would be best to measure on 4–7 subsequent days to get a better picture of your body's ability to metabolise glucose.

If levels are consistently high, use this as an indicator that your insulin sensitivity has decreased and, therefore, your cells may have become insulin resistant.

In healthy people, fasting blood sugar levels range from 4.4 to 5.6 mmol/L (79 to 100.8 mg/dL).

5.7 to 6.4 mmol/L (102.6 to 115.2 mg/dL) indicates you have prediabetes.

Above 6.4 mmol/L (115.2 mg/dL) indicates you have diabetes.

The blood glucose level may rise temporarily after meals in non-diabetics, up to 7.8 mmol/L (140 mg/dL), but should drop back to normal after 2 hours of food or drink consumption.

Alternatively, you could use a continuous glucose monitor.

This brilliant device continuously measures the glucose concentration in your interstitial fluid, so you'll always know when your glucose is too high or too low.

This is also a great way to find out which foods are good for your body and which ones may not be so good. Huge blood sugar spikes after a seemingly healthy meal may indicate that the body cannot handle it well right now. Some people get a huge blood sugar spike after eating oatmeal. I'd take this as a sign that oatmeal might be off-limits for a while. It might not be forever because our bodies change continuously.

The more we heal, the more our bodies tolerate. What troubled you yesterday may be alright tomorrow.

If you've figured out that your blood glucose levels are through the roof, it may be sensible to see a doctor.

## **What else affects your blood glucose levels?**

It's important to know that it's not just the food you eat and the drinks you drink that influence insulin levels.

Stress also has a huge impact. Stress comes in all sorts of forms.

If you have a shitty night of sleep, your cortisol levels will be affected.

Cortisol is a stress hormone that increases sugar (glucose) in the bloodstream. It also increases your brain's use of glucose and raises the availability of substances responsible for tissue repair.

This process is essential for survival situations because evolutionary stress would mean we needed to run away from a tiger or something similar. Once upon a time, we'd have run away from that tiger. Running away from tigers burns a lot of energy, which one has to replenish.

Therefore, cortisol also increases your appetite, so you know you do have to refill with fuel.

This is why elevated cortisol levels can cause cravings for sweet, fatty, and salty foods. It tells you to eat because you need enough energy to run away from the next tiger.

Cortisol can make fat and muscle cells resistant to the action of insulin, and enhance the production of glucose by the liver. This means more glucose, more insulin, and more crying for help from your cells.

If you are chronically stressed and constantly in fight or flight mode, your cortisol levels will be elevated all the time. Therefore, this affects insulin's work negatively.

CONSTANT SHITTY SLEEP => INSULIN RESISTANCE

CONSTANT STRESS AT WORK => INSULIN RESISTANCE

Obviously, it's a bit more complicated than that, but let's keep it simple.

More stress, a bigger appetite, and less control over what you eat.

Stress can literally make us fat.

By the way, exercise (aka running away from tigers) lowers cortisol levels.

Nobody is running away from tigers anymore, so cortisol stays elevated. And we're back at insulin resistance.

# Underactive Thyroid



**A**n underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism) slows down your metabolism. People with low thyroid hormone may have a reduced BMR of up to 25%. This means that a person with hypothyroidism who once had a BMR of 1600 kcal/day in a healthy state now has a BMR of 1200 kcal/day. That's a huge difference and takes away almost a complete meal.

## Symptoms of low thyroid hormone:

- Weight gain
- Infertility
- Fatigue
- Sluggishness
- Sensitivity to cold weather
- Constipation
- Slow heart rate
- Dry skin, hair thinning or loss
- Menstrual irregularities
- Depression
- High cholesterol

## What's causing an underactive thyroid?

- Dieting / not eating enough (how many diets have you tried?)
- Low Vit D (how often do you enjoy sunshine throughout the day?)
- Low zinc (are you scared of red meat?)
- Low selenium (how many brazil nuts have you eaten lately?)
- Low iron (when did you eat your last steak?)
- Low Vit A (how often do you eat leafy greens or beef liver?)
- Too little iodine (do you regularly eat kelp, seaweed, fish, eggs?)
- Too much iodine (For most people in the western world, this is not a problem if they're not overdoing supplements.)
- Stress (When was the last time you calmed yourself with breathing techniques and meditation on a daily basis?)
- Gluten intolerance/coeliac disease (Are you bloated all the time, suffering from skin breaks out, "chicken skin" / keratosis pilaris on arms, getting sick regularly, having

frequent headaches, having stomach cramps, being lethargic, being always constipated or getting diarrhoea, or alternating between the two?)

According to one study, cutting your caloric intake by 16–20% results in a noticeable drop in thyroid hormone T3 levels. Low T3 is heavily linked to weight gain, which helps to explain why people tend to gain weight quickly after dieting. What do you think happens when you constantly diet? Your thyroid won't like it very much!

Similar to how stress makes your body conserve energy, not getting what it needs to function causes your metabolism to slow down.

Yes, you need to eat to create a caloric deficit to lose weight. But you have to do it without harming your thyroid's health.

Because if you don't, it might (and most likely will) backfire.

If you suspect your thyroid to be underactive, I strongly recommend seeing a doctor and insisting on having a full thyroid panel test done. It gives a comprehensive overview of your thyroid function. It measures TSH, T3 (free and total), T4 (free and total), reverse T3, anti-thyroglobulin, and thyroid peroxidase antibodies.

I'm a big fan of repairing health and fertility without drugs. However, if your thyroid is underactive, you may appreciate the help of pharmaceuticals while you address the root cause naturally.

Do not settle for less. Unfortunately, often doctors look only for TSH. TSH alone is completely useless for assessing your thyroid health.

Quick note: as already mentioned, the reader of this book is most likely over their "ideal" weight, whatever that may be. This is why I won't touch the topic of hyperthyroidism. Most people with hyperthyroidism struggle with the opposite and usually cannot gain weight.

# Oestrogen Dominance



**O**estrogen and progesterone work together in a delicate balance to regulate the menstrual cycle and support fertility.

Oestrogen is primarily responsible for the development and maturation of the female reproductive organs, such as the uterus and breasts. It promotes the growth of the uterine lining during the first half of the menstrual cycle and stimulates the release of luteinizing hormone (LH), which triggers ovulation.

After ovulation, the ruptured follicle in the ovary transforms into the corpus luteum, which secretes progesterone. Progesterone plays a crucial role in preparing the uterine lining for implantation of a fertilized egg and maintaining a pregnancy. It helps thicken the uterine lining, supports the growth of blood vessels, and inhibits uterine contractions that could potentially lead to miscarriage.

Oestrogen dominance occurs when there is an excess of oestrogen relative to progesterone in the body. Several factors can contribute to it, including:

1. **Hormonal imbalances:** Certain conditions or factors, such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), insulin resistance, or perimenopause, can disrupt the natural balance between oestrogen and progesterone.
2. **Hormonal contraceptives:** Birth control pills and other hormonal contraceptives contain synthetic hormones, including oestrogen and/or progestin. These hormones can disrupt the natural hormonal balance in the body, potentially leading to oestrogen dominance.
3. **Environmental exposure:** Exposure to xenoestrogens, which are synthetic compounds that mimic the effects of estrogen, can contribute to oestrogen dominance. Xenoestrogens are found in various sources like plastics, pesticides, and some personal care products.

4. Diet and lifestyle: A diet high in processed foods, refined sugars, and unhealthy fats can increase oestrogen levels. Lack of exercise, chronic stress, and inadequate sleep can also disrupt hormonal balance.

Oestrogen dominance can negatively impact fertility by affecting ovulation, cervical mucus quality, and the ability of the uterine lining to support pregnancy. It can lead to irregular menstrual cycles, anovulation, shortened luteal phase, and therefore reduced fertility potential.

Oestrogen dominance can manifest in various symptoms, and the severity and specific symptoms can vary among individuals. Here are some commonly reported symptoms associated with estrogen dominance:

- Irregular menstrual cycles
- PMS (Premenstrual Syndrome) such as bloating, breast tenderness, mood swings, irritability, fatigue, and headaches
- Heavy or prolonged periods
- Fibrocystic breasts
- Weight gain
- Mood changes
- Fatigue
- Decreased libido

It's important to note that these symptoms can be attributed to various other conditions as well.

# Why Can Weight Loss Result in Pregnancy For Some Women?



Keep the following in mind:

1. Diet alone can favourably impact the detoxification process, decrease oxidative stress levels, and reduce blood vessel stiffness. All of this can have a positive impact on fertility.
2. The dose makes the poison. Some substances may be harmful at high rates of exposure. However, they may be completely harmless or even beneficial at low doses. Virtually any substance can be harmful if consumed in sufficient quantities.

**O**ur bodies can totally handle a few harmful things. A little bit of cake or chips every now and then is absolutely fine. A glass of alcohol here and there is no problem. A bottle every night isn't such a good idea.

It matters what you do most of the time, not what you do some of the time!

Consistency beats perfection!!!

## **Reason no. 1 - Toxins are stored in fat but released when fat loss occurs**

Fat cells are little hoarders. That's the whole point of fat. They store stuff to release in bad times. They also store toxins that can't be transported out of your body.

Toxins are everywhere. You've got them in the food you eat. We have plenty of environmental pollutants. All of that, including chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and other toxins, is stored in fatty tissue. Stored in fat.

The more body weight you carry, the more opportunity your body has to store toxins.

During weight loss, fat breaks down and toxins are discharged into the bloodstream.

Organs that help remove toxins include the liver, skin, kidneys, intestines, lymph nodes, and blood vessels. We remove toxic products through breathing out, urine, faeces, and sweating.

This is why it's important that you support your detoxification organs with as much goodness as possible. Support means that they can easily release all the accumulated crap out of you.

Eating well is one of the best ways to support your detoxification pathways. Your body releases toxins better and faster, resulting in quicker healing and, for some, a quicker pregnancy.

## **Reason no. 2 - Oestrogen is stored in fat but released when fat loss occurs**

Fat cells don't just store stuff, they also make stuff.

They store oestrogen but also produce extra oestrogen. As more fat cells you have as more oestrogen is in the making. This means, over time it creates an imbalance of excess oestrogen and can negatively impact your fertility.

Losing fat will release excess oestrogen, resulting in a more hormone-balanced body.

## **Reason no. 3 - Most diets make you eat more nutrient-dense foods and less crap**

If you eat more nutrient-dense, nourishing food, your body gets flooded with the essential nutrients it was missing for hormonal balance and a working reproductive system.

Less processed food also means fewer toxins, which reduces the toxic load further.

Therefore, your body needs to fight less for survival, allowing it to do the things that have been put on hold, which means it can restart the reproductive system.

A nutritious diet promotes better sleep, therefore reducing stress levels and improving reproductive function.

## **Reason no. 4 - Some diets and/or fasting protocols reduce insulin resistance**

Most diets usually include more veggies and fruit (therefore more fibre), more protein, and less fast food, and often enough, people start exercising. All of that improves insulin

sensitivity, which helps restore hormonal balance and therefore helps your fertility. It's that simple.

### **Reason no. 5 - Some diets and/or fasting protocols improve your thyroid health**

You can diet safely and also improve your thyroid. Eating more veggies and protein containing iodine and selenium, less gluten, and practising intermittent fasting (be careful with fasting, though; it's a slippery slope for women) can all help thyroid health and therefore your fertility.

### **Reason no. 6 - Anti-Inflammatory diets heal inflammation**

The immune system reacts to injury or infection with inflammation. This inflammatory response promotes wound healing and aids in the body's ability to fight off infections.

However, chronic inflammation can cause your immune system to become imbalanced over time, which can cause fertility issues. For example, women with PCOS, insulin resistance, or endometriosis have more inflammation in their bodies.

Consuming more fresh, uncooked fruits and vegetables, eating less or no gluten and dairy, increasing high-fibre foods, avoiding processed foods, and eating healthy fats can do wonders in the fight against inflammation and therefore improve your fertility.

### **Reason no. 7 - Some diets and/or fasting protocols improve all of the above**

and boom, get you pregnant.

No one really knows how often losing weight results in pregnancy. Yes, it can help, but there's no guarantee. Far from it.

Next time anyone suggests that you lose weight to get pregnant, please tell them to fuck off. With all due respect, of course.

# Why You Cannot Lose Weight



**Y**ou might say that you've tried everything on this earth to lose weight, but for the love of God, it won't work.

First, you can and will lose weight.

However, as already mentioned above there are many reasons that can make it damn hard to lose weight:

- Eating foods that mess up your brain signals
- Taking certain medicines
- Chronically high-stress levels
- Eating foods that cause inflammation
- Eating foods that feed bad gut bacteria
- Trauma preventing weight loss
- Negative thought patterns preventing sustainable weight loss
- Poor sleep
- Lack of knowledge how much to eat
- No connection your hunger and fullness cues
- Underactive Thyroid
- Diabetes or Insulin resistance (most women with PCOS have insulin resistance)
- Parasites

Stop fighting and working against your body.

Work with your body.

Honour your menstrual cycle, hormonal changes throughout it, and its nutritional needs.

# Tools To Test Your Overall Health



Usually, we want to see results quickly and measure our improvements. I understand that the scales seem to be such a good tool to do so. But....

You've learned so far that weight doesn't matter much.

1. Muscles weigh more than fat. When you start to move more, you will gain more muscle mass; therefore, the scales cannot reflect improvements very much.
2. All bodies are different, and one 163 cm tall body may be perfectly healthy and comfortable at 53 kg, but another 163 cm tall body with a different physique settles at 58 kg.
3. The female body is going through a menstrual cycle. Within this cycle, we tend to experience period-related weight gain. This weight gain is caused by hormonal fluctuations. I'd like to make the bold statement that every woman on God's earth weighs more at the end than on day 10 of her menstrual cycle. I weighed 2 kg more at the end. This would make you cry if you were losing weight and didn't know why all of a sudden you gained so much weight out of the blue.

You already can use the waist-to-hip ratio as your health check tool.

Here are two more tools to measure your health status and improvements.

Resting Heart Rate

Basal Body Temperature

## **Resting heart rate (RHR)**

The number of times your heart beats per minute (BPM) is a great indicator of the health and efficiency of your cardiovascular system. This is the system that moves vital nutrients, gases,

and hormones around the body and is made up of the heart, lungs, and blood vessels, all of which work together in perfect harmony.

Your resting heart rate is your BPM when your body is completely at rest.

- If you are trying to find your resting heart rate, it's best to do it first thing in the morning before you get out of bed.
- Place your index and middle fingers on your neck or wrist. Count the number of beats for sixty seconds. This is your resting heart rate.

The average RHR is between 60 and 100 beats a minute.

Very fit people may have a resting heart rate as low as 40.

Generally, the healthier you are, the lower your RHR will be.

Measure your heart rate regularly every couple of weeks and see the improvements that are happening.

## **Basal Body Temperature (BBT)**

Basal body temperature (BBT) charting is the most useful tool to understand many different aspects of hormonal balance and fertility. It helps you to

- Understand the processes your body is undergoing
- Determine your most fertile days
- Predict menstruation
- Understand potential hormonal imbalances and reproductive issues

Basal body temperature is the body's lowest resting temperature. Due to an increase in the hormone progesterone, our body temperature rises when ovulating. This means the shift in resting body temperature can pinpoint where you are in your cycle, so you can find your fertile window.

BBT can be measured as soon as you wake up in the morning, before getting out of bed. There is a crucial link between measuring basal body temperature and finding your fertile window. BBT can also be used as an indicator of your overall health.

If you're looking up fertility awareness, you might come across the BBT method, BBT thermometers, or tracking BBT.

## **Normal BBT**

First, please keep in mind that we are all different, so a 'normal' basal body temperature doesn't really exist.

However, before ovulation, BBT averages between 97°F (36.1°C) and 97.5°F (36.44°C). The temperature rises after ovulation and stays high for the second half of the cycle.

After ovulation, they usually rise to about 97.6°F to 98.6°F (36.45°C to 37°C).

## **What affects BBT?**

Please note that a few things besides ovulation can also affect basal body temperature.

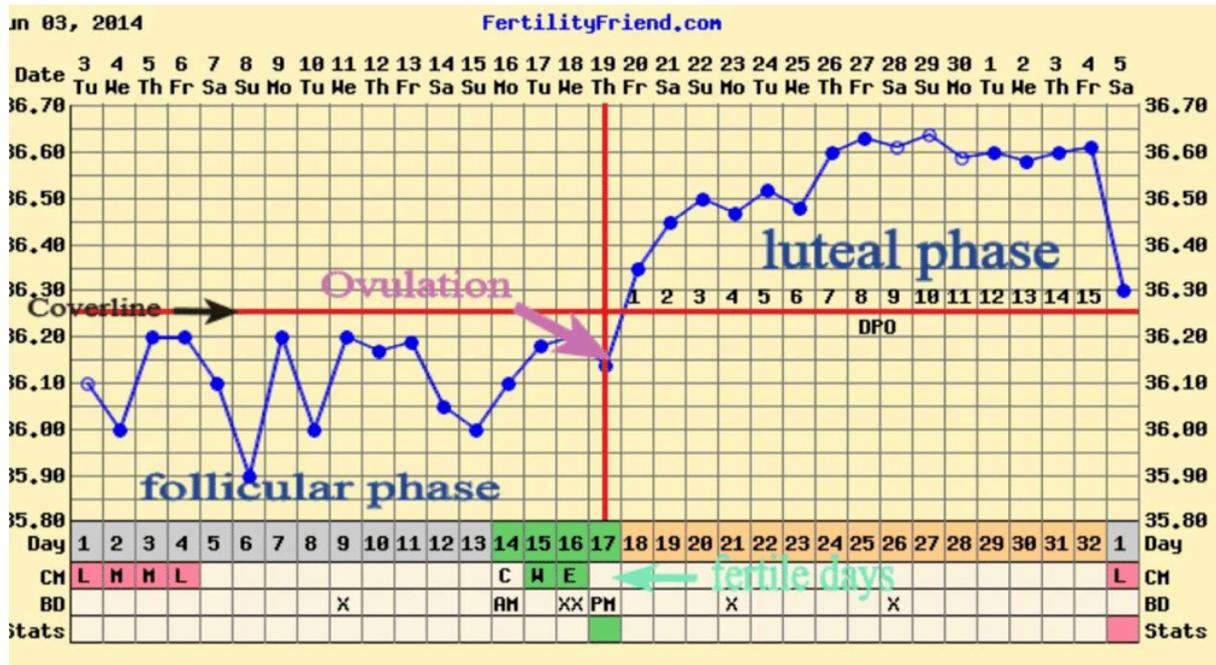
- Not getting enough sleep
- Sleeping more or less than you usually
- Consuming more than a couple of glasses of alcohol
- Being unwell
- Fever
- Certain conditions, such as hypothyroidism, can affect BBT, and those going through menopause may also experience fluctuations in basal body temperature due to hot flashes.
- Pregnancy (One of the signs of early pregnancy is a consistently high basal body temperature. Usually, our temperature dips again right before we get our periods. However, in early pregnancy, due to raised levels of progesterone, the temperature stays high. High levels of progesterone stop the uterine wall from shedding and help with the implantation of the fertilised egg cell.)

## **Detecting Ovulation with a Basal Body Temperature Chart**

The first step to charting your basal body temperature is getting a chart to record your temperature. You can find sample charts in Toni Weschler's book or download this one [HERE](#) from my website.

Another option for charting is using fertility calendars or fertility apps for your phone. Many of them are free.

What should a good BBT chart look like?



This chart was done on the free Fertility Friend FF App, an app used to keep track of your cycle. I'm not affiliated.

## First phase: Follicular phase

It starts from day 1 of your period, or the first day of proper bleeding, to ovulation around the middle.

This phase is predominantly affected by oestrogen activity.

BBT stays in the lower range, generally between 97°F and 97.5°F (36.1°C and 36.44°C).

## Ovulation

You are searching for a general pattern rather than a single temperature spike. While your temperature may fluctuate throughout your cycle, following ovulation you should start to see continuously higher temperatures than before ovulation.

A sign that ovulation has occurred is typically an observable rise of about 0.1°C (0.2°F) from before ovulation to after ovulation.

If you are lucky, you may see a sharp dip in temperature before another sharp rise. Please note that not every woman gets this, though. This is why it's recommended to chart for at least 3 cycles to get a better understanding of your body.

## What are the signs of ovulation?

Reliable ovulation detection involves more than just your basal body temperature. Monitoring also cervical mucus and cervical position will help form a more reliable form of ovulation detection.

Here are the three major signs that ovulation is occurring:

- Cervical mucus will change from a thick, glue-like consistency to being thin and stretchy like egg-white.
- The basal metabolic temperature may slightly rise.
- The position of your cervix may be higher; it may feel softer, more open, and wet.

You may experience slight cramping two days before ovulation. You may also have an increased sexual drive due to a sharp decline in oestrogen levels.

If you are interested in understanding your menstrual cycle in all its detailed glory, please read "Taking Charge of Your Fertility" by Toni Weschler. It's a comprehensive guide to natural birth control and reproductive health.

In general, a BBT chart can't tell you when you should have sex because it tells you that ovulation has occurred but not that it is approaching. As you need to have sex before you ovulate, it's necessary to also check your cervical mucus and the position of your cervix.

If your temperature isn't rising at some point during your cycle and stays within the same range, you most likely are not ovulating.

## Second phase: Luteal phase

It starts at ovulation and ends the day before your period starts.

This phase is controlled by progesterone, as the corpus luteum begins to secrete progesterone.

BBT usually rises to about 97.6°F to 98.6°F (36.44°C to 37°C).

BBT drops either one to two days before or just at the onset of menstrual bleeding.

Progesterone levels and BBT return to normal before menstruation if a fertilised egg does not implant.

If an egg is fertilised and you get pregnant, this drop in progesterone and temperature does not occur.

A brown discharge is not considered a period.

Generally, a period can be anywhere from 26 to 32 days.

There's no such thing as a perfect period.

We are all different.

First, you need to get a good-quality digital BBT thermometer. It doesn't have to be expensive, but it needs to read two digits.

Rules before taking your BBT:

- At least 3 hours of sleep
- No drinking (this includes water)
- No eating
- No speaking
- No movement other than reaching for your thermometer and sticking it into your mouth.

## **Food Cravings throughout the luteal phase**

It's not you. It's your hormones.

Levels of oestrogen and progesterone fluctuate during the menstrual cycle. Before menstruation, the levels of these hormones decrease, which can cause a drop in blood sugar levels. This drop in blood sugar levels can lead to cravings for carbohydrates, sweets, and other hyper-palatable foods.

In addition, the hormonal changes can also affect the levels of the neurotransmitters serotonin and dopamine, which are involved in regulating mood and appetite. Low levels of serotonin can cause feelings of sadness and depression, while low levels of dopamine can lead to a decrease in pleasure and motivation. You can counter act by eating certain foods that can increase the levels of these neurotransmitters, which can help improve mood and alleviate these symptoms.

1. Complex carbohydrates: Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains increase the production of serotonin.
2. Protein-rich foods: Meats, poultry, fish, beans, and nuts contain amino acids that can increase the production of dopamine in the brain.
3. Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids: Fatty fish, flaxseeds, and walnuts have been shown to help regulate mood and alleviate symptoms of depression.
4. Foods high in magnesium: Dark chocolate, nuts, and leafy green vegetables can help improve mood and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.

5. Foods high in vitamin B6 such as bananas, nuts, and chicken contain vitamin B6, which is involved in the production of serotonin and can help regulate mood and reduce symptoms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

Furthermore, the hormone leptin, which is responsible for regulating hunger and satiety, can also be affected by the menstrual cycle. During the luteal phase, leptin levels increase, which can lead to an increase in appetite and cravings for hyper-palatable foods.

Overall, the hormonal changes that occur during the menstrual cycle can contribute to the cravings that some of us experience before our period. However, individual factors such as stress and shitty sleep also play a role.

## **How to take your basal body temperature**

Once you have something to record your temperature on, you can start taking your basal body temperature.

First thing in the morning, before getting out of bed or making any rapid movements, you can measure your BBT. Using a thermometer that is accurate to 1/10th of a degree Fahrenheit or 1/100th of a degree Celsius is essential. If you measure in Celsius means, you need a fertility/basal thermometer that shows two decimal places.

Take your temperature at a fixed time every morning. Place the thermometer under the tongue or armpit (be consistent and stick to one). Keep measuring every day to get a full picture.

Make sure you've had at least 4 hours of sleep before taking your BBT.

Start your chart on the first day of your period and continue throughout the entire cycle.

Make a note of your morning basal body temperature and the time you take it every day.

## **Planned Sex**

If your period is regular and you know when you ovulate, you could plan sex around this time.

The most fertile days are 4-5 days before ovulation and the day of ovulation.

You cannot get pregnant the day after ovulation.

Sperm can live up to five days once inside you. This means that it makes a lot of sense to have sex regularly five days before ovulation.

My practical recommendation is:

Initiate sex every other day after your period is over. Have sex the day before ovulation and on the day itself. If you don't know exactly when that is, simply have sex every other day from days 8–19 of your menstrual cycle.

## **Ovulation Test Strips**

If you're not sure yet whether or when you ovulate, ovulation predictor kits can be used alongside BBT charting, cervical mucus, and cervix position monitoring.

Ovulation test strips work by detecting the luteinizing hormone (LH). About 36 hours before ovulation, LH spikes and forces the egg into its last stages of maturation.

As soon as you get a positive test result, even if it's just a faint line, you should have sex every day for the next few days.

CONS:

Ovulation prediction kits solely indicate that your body is trying to ovulate. They do not confirm that ovulation actually happened. Unfortunately, LH can surge without the egg release. This is a scenario often seen in women with PCOS.

This is why BBT charting is so important.

## **How to use BBT as an indicator of hypothyroidism and diabetes**

As mentioned before, there are things that can influence the BBT. Persistently low body temperature (below 97°F (36.1°C) before ovulation and below 97.6°F (36.44°C) after ovulation) can indicate hypothyroidism and diabetes.

What do you do if your temperature is very low?

You could ask your doctor to get further tests done. Remember to ask for a full thyroid panel, as mentioned earlier.

You could also start making adjustments to your lifestyle and diet and heal from the inside out, which is exactly what you are going to do within the programme.

Normal BBT in the follicular phase is between 97°F and 97.5°F (36.1°C and 36.44°C).

Normal BBT in the luteal phase is 97.6°F to 98.6°F (36.45°C to 37°C).

## **BBT and Progesterone**

A short luteal phase—less than 10 days—may indicate that progesterone is insufficient to hold a pregnancy. In this case, a fertilised egg may have no chance to attach to your uterus and grow into a baby.

## **BBT as a health improvement measure**

As you move forwards within the programme, you might notice changes in your BBT. If you haven't been ovulating, you may find that you are now, as seen in the rise in BBT.

If your progesterone was too low and your luteal phase was short, you may see an increase in luteal phase days, which can be taken as an indicator of progesterone level improvement.

If your thyroid gets the needed support, you may see an increase in BBT.

## **What your period can tell you**

- Very light, insufficient bleeding can indicate low oestrogen.
- Extremely heavy periods could be caused by excess oestrogen.
- Blood clots during menstruation can be a sign of blood stasis, which refers to sluggish or stagnant blood flow.
- Spotting or breakthrough bleeding - Low progesterone can cause intermittent spotting or light bleeding before the expected period.
- Insufficient progesterone can result in a lack of noticeable changes in cervical mucus consistency during the menstrual cycle.
- Regular menstrual periods occurring at intervals shorter than 21 days can be caused by hormonal imbalances, thyroid disorders, uterine fibroids or polyps, adenomyosis, or certain medications.

Be an advocate of your own health

You may become a fantastic advocate for your own fertility by using the data that your body can provide. The more data and charts you have, the clearer your picture of what your body is trying to tell you will be.

# Fertility Boosting Strategy



**M**aturation of eggs takes approximately 100 days prior to ovulation. This is why preconception care should take place for at least 12 weeks prior to conception.

The programme is designed to lead to

## **BALANCED HORMONES AND A HEALTHY MENSTRUAL CYCLE**

because pregnancy cannot happen without a healthy menstrual cycle, including ovulation.

The programme addresses nutritional deficiencies, improves insulin sensitivity, supports ovulation, optimises gut health, supports hormonal balance, reduces inflammation and oxidative stress, reduces stress, supports nervous system and adrenal health, and addresses some modifiable lifestyle factors.

Yes, all of that.

Most importantly, it is designed to make you stick to your new habits in the long run.

Because a diet you cannot stick to in the long run is fucking useless.

You don't want to just get pregnant. You want to stay pregnant and become a mother.

FIRST OF ALL...

Stop telling yourself you can't lose weight or that you struggle to stick to healthy habits.

That mindset is at least half of the problem, if not the entire problem.

That mindset will make you buy crap you don't need, believe crap that makes it harder to be healthy, and most likely just confuse you.

You have probably heard claims like this:

- HIIT workouts are the best way to lose weight. Don't do HIIT workouts if you have PCOS, though.
- Don't eat breakfast. Eat at least six meals per day. Stop, we've changed our mind. Now eat three meals a day, or better yet, just two meals. Hold on, just one meal would be perfect (that's called OMAD, one meal a day; everything has a name these days).
- Don't eat after 6 p.m.; otherwise, you'll end up fat.
- Don't eat cereal or fruit because it raises your blood sugar. No wait, fruit is healthy for you because of its vitamins, minerals, and fibre content.
- Etc. etc. etc.

I can go on and on.

So many people try to sell you crap and make you believe you need to drink their shakes, bend your body in impossible ways, and buy the brand new treadmill at home that will end up as an odd piece of expensive art and the biggest dust collector.

You can and will lose weight whenever you want. You can stick to healthy habits. Just because you've struggled in the past doesn't mean you will struggle in the future. Even if you struggle, you can push through it.

Repeat after me: I might struggle in the future, but that does not mean I cannot do it. I can and will.

Remember, you are here to get pregnant and to put your health first.

From now on, please don't worry about your weight. Excess weight will come off as a byproduct of turning your life around.

# Weight / Fat loss



**Y**ou decide to eat 1,300 kcal per day. After 3 weeks of torture, you have a look in the mirror, feeling exhausted and starved but also seeing results, and decide to end the bullshit and continue with your old eating habits and eat again 2,000 kcal.

But what you didn't know is that your body went to work within the last three weeks and did the following:

1. When you lose weight, you also lose tissue, and you become lighter in the process. This means it is easier to move around, which results in a reduction in energy requirements. Your body needs fewer calories to function.
2. Your body's metabolism adapts slightly and functions on fewer calories.

In our example, your body might have adapted to 1,800 kcal per day, and the minute you go and eat your normal 2,000 kcal, you are not just gaining all the weight back but also more on top because now all of a sudden you are overeating.

With repeated rounds of calorie restriction, your metabolism takes a beating. It will adapt to new conditions.

When you keep your calorie intake very low for too long, your body intervenes and reduces the number of calories you burn throughout the day.

This whole process is called Metabolic Adaptation, a reduction in basal metabolic rate (BMR) that is not explained by lost tissue, and make no mistake, the tissue will be lost during the fat-loss process.

BMR is what you burn at rest, what you'd burn every day to keep your body functioning and alive. Your organs, like the stomach, heart, liver, kidney, etc., require energy to function. Your brain needs plenty of glucose to function. Even if you were to stay in bed all day doing bugger all, your body would still require a certain amount of energy to stick around here.

In the process of weight loss, fat, muscle, and organ mass are also lost. One study found that masses of heart, liver, and kidney decreased by 8, 4, and 6%, respectively.

This means that after weight loss, your organs will need less energy, and you will therefore need fewer calories to function.

On top of this muscle loss, what is left is your metabolic adaptation.

In our example, after the diet, your body needs 1800 kcal to neither lose nor gain weight. In order to lose more weight, you'd need to lower your caloric intake further. Which means the next diet might bring you to 1200 kcal. You'll see more results, but it also means more changes to your metabolic rate.

How low can you go? It's a vicious cycle of underfeeding and more underfeeding.

Additionally, the less you eat, the fewer nutrients your body receives. You may deplete your body of essential nutrients that are necessary for hormonal balance and conception.

Restricting calories on an already calorie-restricted body further disrupts the natural order of your hormones; having too many catabolic and not enough anabolic hormones will send your metabolism and hormonal balance into a tailspin.

But what is the solution?

Rather than living on very few calories and going nuts in the meantime, this programme can help speed up your metabolism AND increase your maintenance calories so that you can eat more.

You can eat more and still lose weight.

How does this sound? Wonderful? I thought so.

The best part is that it's easy and doable, and you'll have the knowledge forever so that you can feed yourself and your future children in a way that's nourishing.

# Calories



**Y**ou need to be in a calorie deficit to lose weight.

Calories do matter. It is what it is.

You could lose fat by eating one Snickers a day. It doesn't matter how messed up or perfect your hormones are. If you want to lose weight, you need to consume less than you burn.

These are the laws of thermodynamics.

Nope, even insulin resistance doesn't matter; thyroid health doesn't matter; and your other hormones don't matter either.

If you don't eat for seven days in a row, you will lose weight. If you are in a calorie deficit, you will lose weight. Regardless of how imbalanced your hormones are. If you go lower than your caloric needs, you will lose weight.

However, all these little things out of balance right now will make you bat sh\*t crazy and fight you all the way.

Your life would be miserable. It would suck badly, and sure as hell, you'd soon be eating too much.

Would your body thrive, heal, and be fertile with one Snickers a day? Of course not.

I don't care how catchy it may sound when someone claims weight loss would be possible without being in a calorie deficit. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

But Carmen, didn't you just mention that I could eat more and lose weight with your programme? How the heck is that supposed to work?

Well, your hormones and even the type of food you eat, heavily determine how many calories your body burns. This means the better your body runs, the less crap it has to deal with, and the more it burns.

You will be able to eat more, but it will be more of the foods that your fertility loves. It may come as a surprise, but your body doesn't love cheesecake every single day. I know that's an extremely sad. It also a fact, an unfortunate one, but a fact is a fact.

## **What is a calorie?**

A calorie is simply a unit of energy. It refers to the energy people get from food.

Now, you may have heard that a calorie is not a calorie.

This is not entirely true either, because the unit of energy doesn't change. But what does change is how your body uses the energy and if it uses all of it.

Let's take nuts as an example. Nuts are very calorie-dense. 100 grammes of walnuts have 654 kcal. 100 grammes of gold bears have 349 kcal in comparison. On paper, it looks like the walnuts are more fattening than the gold bears.

Strangely, research came to the conclusion that they are less fattening than one would think. In one study, they asked people to add either peanuts or candy to their diets, and even though both added the same number of calories, the candy group gained more weight than the peanut-eating group.

What may be the reasons for that?

1. It seems that we don't absorb all the calories coming from nuts, which means some of them go back out your back passage as they came in.
2. A big influencing factor seems to be processing. Calories from unprocessed whole nuts seem to be less absorbed by our bodies than from processed nuts like peanut butter. Your body will metabolise 100g of peanuts differently from 100g of peanut butter. This means if you eat peanut butter, you absorb a higher percentage of calories compared to eating whole peanuts.

If you ask me, that's just logical. You have to chew more, your stomach needs to produce more bile to break things down, etc., etc.

Of course, your body needs to work much harder to break down a whole nut than when half the work is already done.

Food quality matters. This is why, if you eat the right foods, you could eat more and still lose weight.

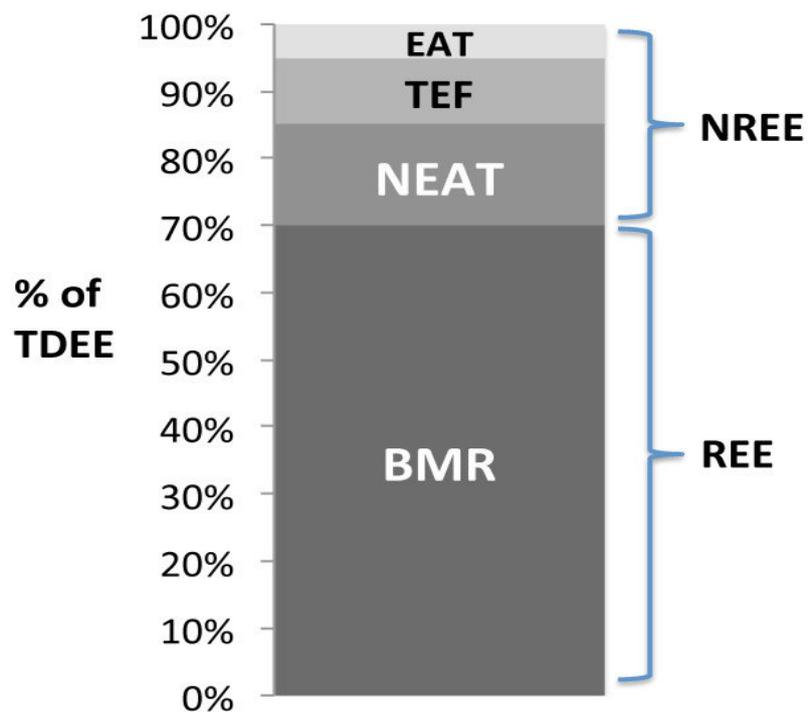
However, I'm sure there are many things science hasn't caught up with and hasn't gotten a full picture of yet. We don't fully understand the impact of food quality on our hormones and on our ability to burn calories.

How can you figure out how many calories you burn per day?

How do you determine how many calories you can eat without losing or gaining weight?

### Burning calories is made up of 4 variables:

- BMR (basal metabolic rate - what you burn at rest)
- NEAT (non-exercise activity thermogenesis - the calories you burn through movement outside of planned exercise)
- TEF (Thermic effect of food - the energy you burn through digestion and absorbing the nutrients from food)
- EAT (Exercise Activity Thermogenesis - what you burn through planned exercise)



## INFLUENCED BY



**EAT**

- If currently exercising
- Type of exercise
- Duration of exercise
- Body and stature of the person
- Exercising



**TEF**

- Fidgeting
- Daily Steps
- Energy availability (fluctuates to up to 60% between individuals)



**NEAT**

- Meal composition
- Protein content of food
- Fibre content of food
- Hydration



**BMR**

- Sleep
- Training status (overtrained)
- Energy availability
- Current hormonal balance
- Hydration
- Body mass
- Body composition
- Nutrient balance

Even two people who seemingly look similar, have similar daily habits, exercise similarly, and have similar eating habits might have widely differing levels of energy requirements.

They may have some metabolic differences, but the amount of food they need to maintain their weight will often be drastically affected by their NEAT. Some people hardly move at all while sitting; others tap their feet constantly during work. They simply can't sit still.

If you walk to work or spend time getting up regularly from your desk to stretch and move around, logically you are going to burn more calories from these activities than your colleague who drives to work and is chained to their desk all day.

## Total Daily Energy Expenditure (TDEE)

$BMR + NEAT + TEF + EAT = TDEE$

Calories at rest + through movement outside of planned exercise + digestion and absorbing the nutrients from food + planned exercise = TDEE

TDEE is the number of calories you burn each day. TDEE is the amount of energy you consume without gaining or losing weight.

If you consume more than your TDEE, you can expect to gain weight. If you consume less, you'll lose weight.

However, if you solely focus on a caloric deficit and not food quality, chances are that you won't give your body enough nutrients to restore hormonal balance.

Remember, you want to get pregnant, stay pregnant, and hold a baby in your arms. Fertility goes far beyond weight loss.

Your body needs to receive all the nutrients needed to balance your hormones, release toxins, and bring your reproductive system to a functioning state.

This programme gives your body a chance to get an abundance of nutrients, nourishment, and love. This programme allows you to become an energy-burning machine that thrives and heals fast.

Unwanted and not-needed weight will come off in the process of restoring hormonal balance.

# Cheat Days



**L**et me be upfront. Cheat days are bullshit. Cheat days sabotage most otherwise good nutrition plans. If you manage to stick to your schedule from Monday through Friday but are an utter shitshow on the weekends, you will have a very hard time creating a nourishing environment for your baby.

But what's the reason behind your Friday-to-Sunday gorging? Well, it's what people do, isn't it? They have been good all week and deserve a break. I can sing a song (or two or three) about that strategy.

To me, the end of the work week meant chocolate, pizza, pasta, cookies, ice cream, and bad movies. It was a weekend ritual. I did it, my partner did it, and literally everybody else I knew.

Saturday, when I got to eat whatever I wanted, was the highlight of my week. My way of unwinding. Food became a gateway drug for the rest of the weekend.

Weekends I skipped the gym, ate huge breakfasts on Saturdays, and had big lunches afterwards. I went out for a heavy meal or stayed home for a movie night with lots of snacks at hand. Sunday brunch with friends, of course, and getting yummy ice cream on my walks afterwards. And, naturally, because it's Sunday, you close with a big roast.

In my head, the weekend was a time to relax. Food crunching and chewing took away my stress, my anger, and my frustrations.

Assume that a person has a TDEE of 2,100 calories daily (14,700 kcal weekly) and eats 1,700 calories daily (11,900 kcal weekly) for steady fat loss and eats in the following way:

- Monday – 1,700 calories
- Tuesday – 1,700 calories
- Wednesday – 1,700 calories
- Thursday – 1,700 calories
- Friday – 2,600 calories
- Saturday – 3,500 calories

- Sunday – 2,900 calories

If they eat like above, they'd actually be in a weekly surplus of 1,100 kcal and gain weight. Oops. All weekly efforts are thrown out the window. Gone with the wind.

Friends are usually happy to support the habits. Once, my best friend said, It's so nice to spend time with you because, in your company, I can overeat without feeling guilty.

But, of course, overindulgence comes with consequences.

Weekends are filled with feeling physically uncomfortable and bloated. The sex drive might leave you because you feel stuffed and suffer from lots of gas.

After I got into the food, I felt guilt, shame, and remorse kick in, making me feel like crap and an absolute failure. I was always regretful and angry at myself.

At some point, all the overindulgence comes with consequences. The body is in a constant state of inflammation. The joints hurt, and a feeling of constant fullness prevents exercise. One might be lying awake with meat sweats, or you are waking up in the middle of the night. Reflux, acne, bad breath, a constantly runny nose, hair loss on the head, hair growth on the chin, etc.

Researchers have found that women who binge eat tend to have lower levels of oestrogen. Interestingly, when oestrogen is increased, binge eating is inhibited.

The cycle is hard to break. Very hard indeed.

However, weekends are not the only problem. Usually, there will be some questionable weekday habits, too.

These habits and, especially, thought processes are perhaps more crucial to get the whole picture.

Identifying general eating patterns—why, when, and where one eats too much or simply when not hungry—is one of the keys to developing a healthier relationship with food, your body, and yourself.

## **Aim for “good enough” instead of “perfect”**

When you beat yourself up because you ate something you shouldn't have eaten, it will make you miserable. You feel like a failure all the time. Then you drown in a tremendous amount of self-pity, which will make you want to feel better, so you'll eat again the food that made you miserable in the first place.

It's a vicious cycle.

For most of us humans, there are only two options: perfect or absolutely crap.

Take perfection off the table, and things might change.

What about allowing yourself to eat the things you like?

How often did you tell yourself that you wouldn't touch a particular food anymore because you're on a diet but start craving this particular food again and again and again?

Restriction fuels temptation.

Instead of being rigid and having a spinach and kale salad for lunch instead of four servings of hot chips with a schnitzel, there could be:

"I'm actually in the mood for a salad with my schnitzel today because I had chips for dinner yesterday."

At 9.30 pm in front of the TV, when a pure boredom craving hits, you could say to yourself:

"I can have chocolate whenever I want, but for now I'm choosing my health over a huge chocolate bar. I'm actually just peckish and not that hungry. I'll survive until tomorrow, and I can have that chocolate bar for breakfast if I feel like it. Now, I brush my teeth and go to bed."

Helpful strategy:

Make a list of your favourite foods that you know may not be the best for your health.

Plan these foods into your week.

This takes out mindless eating and a restrictive mindset.

If it takes a couple of pieces of chocolate each and every night to keep you sane, plan these into your day. For example, maybe it's your new routine to have them every night after dinner when all the dishes are done.

If you love pizza, plan to eat one on maybe a Wednesday. Each Wednesday, you have a pizza. Wonderful. Eat the pizza, enjoy every single bite, and forget about it. You nourish your body every single day. One pizza won't ruin your fertility, but eating crap every single day all day long does.

Consistency is key, not perfection!

If you feel like pizza the next day, remind yourself that you can have pizza any day you like. There is no shortage on pizza. And just for today, you can choose to have something nourishing instead. You choose. You can have it whenever you want. For today, you can choose to have something else.

# Feeling better



**M**ost of us enter this world healthy, well, and content. We have a feeling of ease. This feeling of ease is our natural state, and we will do anything to go back to feeling it. In other words, if you feel bad, you do anything to make yourself feel better. This is human nature. We are inclined to seek pleasure and avoid pain.

Keeping this simple fact in mind, look at all of your behaviour over the years. All "bad" habits and "unhelpful" behaviours are there to make you feel better and to bring you back to your natural state of ease. Some people clean their houses to make themselves feel better; some people run to the gym to feel good about themselves; and some people use substances to make themselves feel better. The principle stays the same. It's just that one behaviour doesn't hurt anyone, whereas another can hurt yourself and even the people around you.

Using a substance, even if it is "just" food, is just an attempt to make you feel good and to bring you back to your natural state. That's all it is.

As the reader of this book most likely isn't a drug addict, alcoholic, or gambler, let's stick to the example of using food to bring you back to ease. It's the attempt to move from dis-ease to ease.

It's also important to know that the thoughts we have in our heads play a major role in bringing us back to ease. Your brain will do anything to protect you from pain. Once it's learned that something gives you release and a little contentment, it will try to make you go back to this behaviour over and over again. It will send you urges. Urges so strong you will feel they are impossible to resist

You think it's a lack of willpower leading you back to the pantry, but no, it's your brain sending you there in an attempt to make you feel good.

Our eating habits are complex and multifaceted, with both psychological and physiological components. We do not come to this world with bad eating habits. Eating habits are formed throughout the years by our environment.

Again, when we enter this world, we are the most perfect little creators and absolutely in tune with ourselves and our hunger cues. We are not yet conditioned to eat when we're hungry and stop when we are full. This can change very quickly, though. If a mother puts a baby on a feeding schedule, this baby learns fairly quickly not to be able to listen to its own hunger cues anymore. If a child always has to finish its plate, it will learn to override its natural fullness signs and stop realising when it's full and doesn't require further food.

We are born with a God-given connection to our bodies. Our inner wisdom is ancient knowledge that can give us all the answers, including what's good for us and what isn't. However, we also have our human brain, which is there to keep you alive and surviving in a harsh environment. It will learn quickly and store memories in your subconscious mind so you can keep remembering how to survive. It's not fully understood yet how thoughts are formed, but I believe that a tonne of them come from our subconscious mind to keep us alive and away from pain. It seeks comfort, pleasure, and above all, survival. If it deems something unsafe, it will send you the strongest urges and thoughts to keep you in the direction it judges as safest.

Our thoughts can be influenced by a variety of factors, including our past experiences, cultural conditioning, beliefs, emotions, and cognitive biases. As mentioned, these factors are usually memorised by our subconscious and are outside of our conscious control.

The problem is that our thoughts, whether true or false, create our actions and our habits.

If I never question my thoughts and accept them as God-given and true, I let my subconscious mind run my life day in and day out. Which means I let my past determine my present and my future actions.

But guess what? You have the option to decide whether or not to accept the thought in your head as true or false. As soon as you accept the thought as true or false, the thought becomes exactly this: true or false.

I used to think that I would miss out big time if I could not eat half a glass of Nutella with a spoon. The thought of not having this treat gave me anxiety. It came as a huge surprise that Nutella isn't necessary for my happiness at all. I haven't touched it in years, and I don't even miss it.

Here is the thing: Thoughts I accept as true will create a feeling within the body. These feelings can appear to be unbearable at times, especially when they're negative.

However, I've found out that I can also observe the thought in my head and question its truth. It's totally up to me if I believe the bullcrap going on up there, question it, or simply deny its

validation and call it what it usually is: bullshit. You have no idea how much bullshit my head is coming up with all day long. It's quite entertaining, actually.

Unfortunately, it's also heaps of negative self-talk about myself: I'm too fat, my stomach isn't flat enough, nobody will find me attractive the way I look, I'm not smart enough, I've always been an outsider, nobody really likes me as I am, blablabla etc. etc.

It also turns out that my brain believes, it owns a powerful crystal ball. Apparently, I'm psychic and know the outcome of any given scenario. Of course, the crystal ball seldom predicts a positive outcome. It's fascinating how many horror scenarios I have created in my head over the years. I've imagined my friends hating on me and especially judging me a trillion times; strangers judged me; my boss thought I was useless; my work was never good enough; in my head, I failed hundreds of tests; I got laughed at in presentations; and so on. This book here is never going to be good enough to be ever released or read by anyone. My head came and comes up with endless bullshit, predicting a future catastrophe or at least a negative outcome.

Observe your thoughts. Be an observer and ask questions.

You are not bound by your thoughts. You can call these little fuckers out and tell them to be kind or to fuck off. You can even choose to ignore them.

Observing your thoughts and acknowledging that they are most likely false is the most powerful tool you will ever find in your life. I'm convinced that this particular tool ended the binge eating disorder I've struggled with for so many years.

How do you know a thought is false?

I always check whether there is fear attached to the thought. As soon as I sense fear, I get suspicious. Fear is always attached to my brain and the human in me rather than to my God-self. Especially in a first-world country, there is not much to be afraid of. Chances are low that I will lose the roof over my head or that I won't have enough to eat or clean water to drink. As long as we don't talk about me or my loved ones dying, which is something out of my control anyway, there is not much to be afraid of. This doesn't mean that losing a job wouldn't suck badly, but in a first-world country, things like this are usually manageable.

Anyway, as soon as I sense fear, I know I have to look much closer at my thoughts. It turns out that my head is creating lots of false information. A hell of a lot of false information.

Whenever the urge to binge came up, I looked at my thoughts and questioned them. Does my happiness really depend on a glass of Nutella? Do I really need to give in to the urge to eat?

I also observed the urge. That's an interesting exercise on its own.

I let the urge exist, not denying it but also not giving in. Simply accepting that it's there.

No, this wasn't easy. Far of it.

But it was necessary. I wanted to stop treating my body with so much disrespect. I couldn't do this to myself anymore. I was at my wits end. I knew I needed to start nourishing it; otherwise, I'd get sicker and sicker. I didn't want to be sick. I was sick of feeling sick all the time.

I started observing my thoughts about the urge. Sometimes I wrote them down so I could see what kind of crap my brain came up with.

It's a process that takes time. It's really tough at times. But you learn a lot about yourself. You learn to be kinder to yourself. You learn to take responsibility for your actions. You learn to change your thoughts and finally create a better life for yourself. It gets easier, I promise.

These days, I rarely have urges. If I do, I simply remind myself that I don't have to follow the thought at all, and I don't binge anymore. It's not who I am because I am at ease. I came to this world as good as I am, and if I listen closely to this version of me, I don't need to give in to fear-based thoughts. And you don't have to either.

# You Are Not A Rubbish Bin



**Y**our body is not a rubbish bin, so stop treating it like one.

Our bodies are incredible machines that carry us through life's adventures, and one of the most important ways we can express love and care for our bodies is by nourishing them with good food. Food is not just fuel for our bodies; it is also a source of joy, pleasure, and vitality. When we choose to eat nutritious and wholesome foods, we are showing our bodies love and respect, and investing in our long-term health, fertility and well-being.

Our bodies require a variety of vitamins, minerals, protein, carbohydrates, healthy fats, and other essential nutrients to perform their various functions, such as building and repairing tissues, supporting our immune system, regulating our hormones, and providing energy for daily activities. By choosing whole, unprocessed foods that are naturally nutrient-dense, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, meats, fish, nuts, and seeds, we are providing our bodies with the necessary tools to thrive.

Accepting our body means listening to it and being attuned to its unique needs.

I deliberately don't speak about loving your body. It can be hard to love something one despised for a long time.

Usually acceptance is much easier.

You have just this one body. Accepting this simple fact can be enough to shift your mindset into the right direction. Accept, God won't give you another body. You've got this one and that's it. And you are in tune with it. It's speaking to you. You can choose to listen.

Acceptance and choosing to listen means being aware of how different foods make us feel physically, mentally, and emotionally. Nourishing our bodies with good food involves

choosing foods that make us feel energized, alert, and satisfied, rather than foods that may provide temporary pleasure but leave us feeling sluggish, bloated, or guilty.

We can choose to view food as a source of nourishment, pleasure, and celebration, and approach eating with a sense of balance, moderation, and mindfulness. We don't need to use food as a tool to make us feel good about ourselves. We rarely do feel good about ourselves when having absolutely overindulged, do we?

Nourishing our bodies with good food is not about perfection or deprivation; it is about making choices that prioritize our well-being while still allowing ourselves to enjoy a variety of foods in moderation. It is about finding a sustainable and enjoyable way of eating that works for our individual bodies and lifestyles. This may mean trying new foods, experimenting with different cooking techniques, and finding creative ways to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into our meals.

Ultimately, accepting our bodies by nourishing them with good food is a form of self-care that promotes our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It is a way of showing ourselves kindness, respect, and appreciation for the amazing bodies we inhabit. When we prioritize our health and nourish our bodies with wholesome foods, we are giving ourselves the gift of vitality, fertility, and an overall greater quality of life.

Ask yourself BEFORE you eat: How will I feel after eating? Will I feel good about myself? Will my body feel good? Will I feel energised or sluggish?

Start listening. As soon as you do this, you will eventually act accordingly.

# How To Work The Program



**Y**ou don't have to read through the programme all at once. You could start the programme and read the next chapter a couple of days before it starts. Every phase will have new things to learn about.

Once implemented, you will keep up with the newly formed habit for the remainder of the programme.

Example and spoiler alert: I will ask you to sleep for 7-8 hours per day. I will also ask you to implement certain habits to make this happen. You will keep going with these new habits and 7-8 hours of sleep per day until you reach the end of the programme.

Most changes made are supposed to be carried into the next phase.

There are exceptions to the rule, but they will be clearly marked as exceptions.

Each phase is supposed to last for at least one day but no longer than one week. It's up to you how fast you'd like to implement changes.

Be aware that change takes time. Be gentle and move slowly. The slower you go, the more sustainable your restored fertility will be.

At the very end, I will give you the exact mathematical formula to lose weight.

Why on God's earth don't I start with it? As I said, a caloric deficit doesn't necessarily give you the key nutrients you need to get pregnant, stay pregnant, and deliver a healthy baby.

This programme is designed to help your fertility. Weight loss will be the byproduct of improving your reproductive health. I promise that if you follow my instructions, it's going to be impossible not to drop unwanted weight.

# DAY 1

## Setting Intentions



**Y**ou want to get healthy and create the most fertile body there is. This requires you to create new habits. If the old ones worked, you wouldn't be here, would you?

Creating new habits that last a lifetime takes time. But the good news is that you are going to do it just for today. Don't worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow isn't here yet. We all could be dead by tomorrow. So who cares about tomorrow?

It's just for today. Today only.

Today you eat and live in a joyful, healthy, balanced way. Just for today. You cannot change what happened yesterday, and you have no idea what will happen tomorrow.

For today, you set the intention to enjoy healthy food and to nourish your mind and body in a way that creates fertile ground for your little baby.

This is why you will get up, grab a pen and a journal—no, not your tablet or your phone—and write down how you would like the day to unfold. It's going to be important to write in the present tense and never include the word not.

The word NOT has no energy or direction attached to it.

Let me give you an example: Do not think of an elephant. Don't you dare think of an elephant.

What are you thinking about? Let me guess: an elephant. You were thinking about a big grey elephant.

Delete the word not from your vocabulary. Focus on what you want instead of what you don't want.

There is also a fear attached that is stopping us from eating well consistently. It is not the shaky willpower or that we are bad as a person.

It's the fear of missing out. The fear of missing out sabotages the ability to say no to food that doesn't nourish us.

You look at the food and you might want to say no to it, but immediately the fear of missing out on happiness, enjoyment, etc. kicks in and ruins the vibe. This usually spirals people into feeling deprived, which creates frustration and leads to eating comfort food—usually more than one wants.

The fear of missing out makes it incredibly hard to say no.

How do you learn to say no without feeling like you're missing out?

Well, fear is an amazing driver of change. You can use it to your disadvantage, but also to your advantage.

You're going to ask yourself the following questions whenever you feel like eating.

Will I miss out on feeling really good when I eat this?

Will I miss out on nourishing my body and creating a welcoming womb when I eat this?

If the answers are yes, the next question is:

How can I nourish my body and soul in the easiest way possible today?

Follow up with the reminder:

I can have this food whenever I want it. It's not going anywhere. There is no shortage. I can have this all the time.

For now, I can choose to nourish my body.

## **DAILY TASK**

Every morning directly after waking take a pen and a piece of paper. Smile and write down the following (you could extend this with whatever you like):

I am grateful I'll experience so many wonderful things today. I am ready to eat nutritious food. I feel that today is so much easier than yesterday. I have plenty and can always have as much as I want. I love people as they are and people love me as I am. I feel and see that my body is healing.

Why do I want you to smile?

There is evidence that suggests that the physical act of smiling can influence your emotional state through the mind-body connection. Your body posture and facial expressions can send signals to your brain, shaping your emotions and mood and result in increased happiness or positive emotions.

**SMILE!!!**

# DAY 2

## Pleasure



**T**oo often we use food for reasons we shouldn't be using it. We might be trying to fill a hole that usually has been created in childhood. We might numb immense pain we don't want to feel. Maybe our parents didn't love us as we are. Maybe we're not feeling good enough for anyone or anything. There are a million reasons why the hole is there. It doesn't matter what kind of hole or who left it there. It matters that you know it's there and needs attention.

The more you try to fill it with food, the more you avoid feeling the pain, and the more it will creep up on you.

We are filled with fear and cannot stand the feeling.

The next words may come as a surprise, but nothing happens when you feel the feelings, the pain, the sadness, the frustration, the anger.

Nothing.

You won't die.

The earth won't open and swallow you.

You're not bursting into flames.

Feeling pain is OK.

Is it nice? No. It's uncomfortable. It hurts. Sometimes a lot.

But nothing can happen to you when you feel it.

It might be a hell of a lot painful. Hell, yes.

But will anything happen to you?

No.

I urge you to feel the pain and the hole that's been left within you.

There is growing evidence to suggest that bottled-up or unexpressed emotions can have a negative impact on physical health and potentially contribute to the development of disease. Here are some possible ways in which unexpressed emotions may lead to disease:

1. **Chronic Stress:** When emotions are not expressed or dealt with in a healthy way, they can accumulate and lead to chronic stress. Prolonged stress can have detrimental effects on the body, including increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, weakened immune system, and increased inflammation. Over time, chronic stress can contribute to the development of various diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, immune-related disorders, and gastrointestinal issues, and also affect your fertility.
2. **Suppressed Immune Function:** Emotions, particularly negative ones like anger, fear, or sadness, can have a direct impact on the immune system. When emotions are not processed or expressed, they can disrupt the normal functioning of the immune system, leading to a weakened immune response. This can make the body more vulnerable to infections, autoimmune diseases, and affect your fertility.
3. **Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms:** Bottled-up emotions can also lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as excessive alcohol or drug use, overeating, or other maladaptive behaviors. These coping mechanisms can have negative effects on physical health, including weight gain, addiction, and increased risk of chronic diseases like diabetes, liver disease, or cardiovascular diseases, and of course your fertility.
4. **Disrupted Neuroendocrine System:** Emotions are closely tied to the complex interplay between the brain and the endocrine system, which controls the release of hormones in the body. Bottled-up emotions can disrupt this delicate balance, leading to imbalances in hormone levels, such as cortisol, adrenaline, and other stress-related hormones. These hormonal imbalances can contribute to a wide range of health issues, including hormonal disorders, metabolic disorders, and - you guessed it - reproductive issues.
5. **Increased Inflammation:** Unexpressed emotions can also contribute to increased inflammation in the body. Inflammation is a natural response of the immune system to stress or injury, but chronic inflammation can be harmful and has been linked to various diseases, including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and

neurodegenerative disorders. Unexpressed emotions can contribute to increased stress and inflammation, which may further contribute to the development of infertility.

It's important to note that the relationship between unexpressed and stored emotions and disease is complex and multifactorial, and more research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms involved. However, evidence suggests that unexpressed emotions can have a significant impact on physical health and well-being. It's essential to find healthy ways to express, manage, and process emotions to promote emotional and physical health.

### **DAILY TASK:**

Get a journal and a pen (no, not your phone - it needs to be a paper journal) and write down every single morning:

I am ok with feeling my emotions. I'm also ok with feeling empty. I am feeling content and at peace with all I eat and drink.

You add these sentences to the ones from day 1.

From now onwards every single morning after waking you'll write in your journal:

I am grateful I'll experience so many wonderful things today. I am ready to eat nutritious food. I feel that today is so much easier than yesterday. I have plenty and can always have as much as I want. I love people as they are and people love me as I am. I feel and see that my body is healing. I am ok with feeling my emotions. I'm also ok with feeling empty. I am feeling content and at peace with all I eat and drink.

Of course, I won't let you feel empty and miserable all the time. I want you to be joyful and happy. This is why you are going to fill the hole with something else. Something that brings you pleasure.

What brings you pleasure?

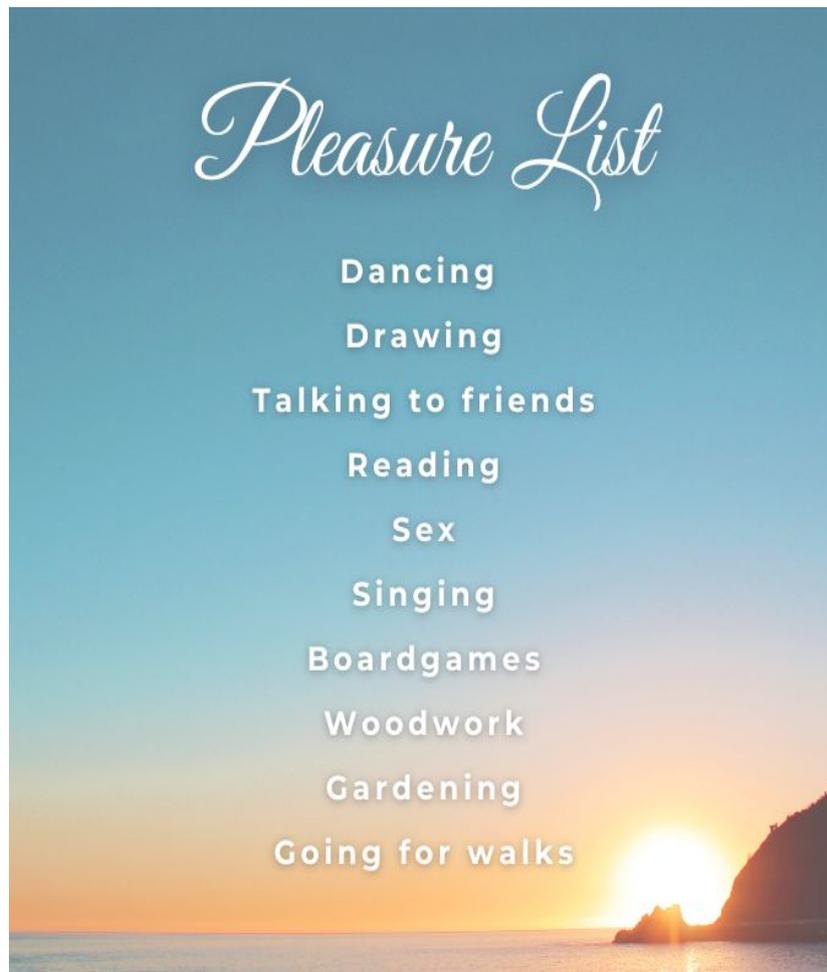
Make a list of at least 10 things other than food that bring you pleasure and write them down in your journal. It's best to have it on the front page so you'll see it every morning.

Examples:

Dancing, drawing, talking to my friends, reading a book, having sex, singing, playing boardgames, doing woodwork, gardening, going for walks, etc.

Beware: Shopping is a form of entertainment and can lead to addiction, so it has no room on your pleasure list. Alcohol, Cigarettes, Drugs, and literally anything else addictive does not belong on the pleasure list either.

Now, pin this list also on the fridge and pantry or wherever food is stored.



## DAILY TASK

Every morning, after you write your intentions, pick one or two tasks and make time to do the activity or activities for at least 15 minutes a day.

Whenever you feel like you need to eat and it's not accompanied by real hunger signs like stomach growling, I want you to walk up this list, pick one task, and do it.

This does not mean you deny yourself food. You can always eat.

Assure yourself that you can eat whatever and whenever you want when you're hungry. If the food craving did not dissipate after 15 minutes of pleasure-inducing activity, tell yourself that you can eat then.

First, allow yourself to feel pleasure in a different way.

At some point, you might find that the hole inside can be filled much better with other things than food.

You might also find that you are actually able to enjoy the food you otherwise just chucked down to give you some sort of relief.

**BONUS TIP:** Do a pleasure-bringing activity directly in the morning. It sets a positive, uplifting tone for the rest of the day and will bring you joy immediately after waking.

### **TASK SUMMARY**

Journal daily.

I am grateful I'll experience so many wonderful things today. I am ready to eat nutritious food. I feel that today is so much easier than yesterday. I have plenty and can always have as much as I want. I love people as they are and people love me as I am. I feel and see that my body is healing. I am where I am supposed to be right now. I am ok feeling my emotions. I am ok with feeling empty. I am feeling content and at peace with all I eat and drink.

Practise one or more pleasure-bringing activities for at least 15 minutes a day.

# DAY

## 3-10 Sleep



**E**verything you do and do not do is impacted by the way you rest.

It's a hugely important but often overlooked element of your overall health and, therefore, fertility.

Sleep influences:

- Hormonal Balance
- Insulin Resistance
- Food cravings
- Physical performance
- Libido
- State of mind/mood
- Immune system
- Stress levels

Good sleep can improve the levels of hormones that are crucial to achieving and carrying a pregnancy, like progesterone, oestrogen, leptin, and follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH).

According to the American Society for Reproductive Medicine's study, women with poor quality rest had lower rates of fertility than those getting enough sleep.

A lack of sleep can also lead to overeating and decreased testosterone levels in men.

The blue light of your tablet or phone suppresses melatonin, which is a key hormone that both helps you sleep and protects your eggs. In other words, blue light may negatively influence your egg quality and make achieving a pregnancy more difficult.

And to top it all off: Bad sleep can decrease calorie-burning abilities by 5–20 percent the entire next day.

Solution:

- Have 7 to 8 hours of sleep every night for an adequate hormonal foundation.
- Put away computers, phones, tablets, and other electronics at least an hour before bedtime.

Unfortunately, getting 8 hours of sleep but going to bed at 2 a.m. and waking up at 10 a.m. is not the same as going to bed at 10 p.m. and waking up at 6 a.m. What time you choose to go to bed can actually affect your sleep quality. The ratio of restorative deep sleep to lighter, more dream-infused sleep changes throughout the night. The early part of the night is dominated by the deeper restorative sleep, but as you move towards daybreak, you'll experience more of the lighter dream-infused sleep. Unfortunately, regardless of what time you choose to go to bed, the shift between these two happens at specific parts of the night.

If you go to bed super late, your sleep will be less deep and leave you feeling tired and groggy.

But even if you are going to bed at 10 p.m., for some of you it's easier to get good sleep than for others.

Another problem might be that falling asleep may seem like an impossible task when you're tossing and turning at 2 a.m., cursing at your own thoughts.

However, good sleep is more under your control than you might think.

Following healthy sleep habits can make all the difference.

If you make it your sole life's purpose to have 7-8 hours of sleep per night, I promise it will make a huge difference to literally everything in your life.

I've divided this phase into little steps to make implementing new sleeping habits easier.

If you already have some of these habits or are sleeping 7-8 hours per day, good for you. I still want you to have a close look at the sleep "rules" below. If you do have similar habits, well done. If not, please consider implementing the rules outlined below regardless. All of the sleep "rules" are also designed to reduce your stress levels. Infertility is the most stressful journey one can be on. So do yourself a favour and do what I tell you to do.

## **DAILY TASK**

Have 7 to 8 hours of sleep every night.

Implement one rule each day over the course of the next 7 days. By the end of seven days, you will have implemented all of the rules. Follow them religiously each and every day.

#### SLEEP RULE 1

- Put your phone away at least one hour before bedtime.
- Keep your phone away from your bed.
- Go to bed at 10 p.m.

#### SLEEP RULE 2

- Spend 20–30 minutes per day outside in the sunlight without sunglasses. Sleep duration is mainly affected by circadian rhythm, and circadian rhythm is affected by the melatonin level controlled by sunlight exposure. Sunlight also helps your Vit D and melatonin production, which are essential for health and fertility.

#### SLEEP RULE 3

- Avoid caffeine after lunch. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, chocolate, coke, and some pain relievers.

#### SLEEP RULE 4

- Avoid alcohol 3 hours before bedtime. Alcohol may help you fall asleep, but after a few hours, it acts as a stimulant, waking you up and generally decreasing the quality of your sleep.

#### SLEEP RULE 5

- Sleep in a quiet, dark, and cool environment. Sleeping in a colder room can improve your sleep quality and even help you beat dreadful insomnia episodes. Turn your heater off!!!! If needed, put another blanket on top.

#### SLEEP RULE 6

- Do not exercise before bedtime. Finish exercise at least 3 hours before bedtime. Exercise stimulates the body to release our stress hormone cortisol, which then activates the alerting mechanism in the brain.

This might be a quick and easy task for some of you;-)

#### SLEEP RULE 7

- At dinner, consume ½ cup of carbohydrates with a higher glycemic index. High-glycemic index carbohydrates, which raise blood sugar quickly, hasten sleep, especially if consumed four hours before bedtime.

Choose from the following options:

White potatoes

Sweet potatoes

White rice (if you insist on eating brown go ahead but who wants to eat brown rice?)

Pasta

Any fruit

Just a side note - I said  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup, not  $\frac{1}{2}$  plate.

# DAY 11

## Walk



**R**educing stress levels is from utter importance when it comes to our reproductive system.

As mentioned stress is a natural response of the body to a perceived threat, whether real or imagined. When stress becomes chronic, it can have negative effects on many aspects of our health, including our reproductive system. We talk about hormonal imbalances that can lead to an irregular menstrual cycle, infertility, and even premature menopause. Then there is reduced libido, a weakening of the immune system function which makes it more difficult for the body to fight off infections and diseases that can affect reproductive health, and also the emotional well-being when dealing with infertility. Trying to conceive can lead to a tremendous amount of stress and anxiety, which can make it even more difficult to conceive.

I need you to be first and foremost relaxed. Because if you are able to handle your emotional rollercoaster throughout the day, the food part will be tremendously easier.

This is why all of the programme's first steps are designed to help you relax.

And the following task is no different but can also help you stay away from snacks after dinner. A 10 minute walk after dinner can help you

1. Increase insulin sensitivity, which can help reduce cravings for sweets or high-carbohydrate foods.
2. Reduce stress levels, which can be a trigger for cravings. When we're stressed, our bodies release the stress hormone cortisol, which can increase appetite and cravings for unhealthy foods.
3. Improve digestion by increasing blood flow to the stomach and intestines, which can help reduce bloating and discomfort.

4. Increase mindfulness and bring you back to the present moment, be aware of signs of fullness. When we're more aware of our hunger levels, we're less likely to give in to cravings and make unhealthy food choices.

I said you shouldn't be exercising 3 hours before bed time, didn't I?

But a short 10 minute walk after dinner doesn't count as exercise. You're not supposed to train for the next marathon.

A walk after dinner is the most simple and effective way to help you improve your chances of getting pregnant. I don't need you to exercise but I do need you to move your body. Humans are designed to move. And I know that you know this as much as I do.

After dinner tonight, take just 10 minutes to go for a walk. It doesn't have to be a strenuous workout, just a gentle stroll around the block (don't go through the park at night, please).

By taking this short walk, you'll be improving your digestion, reducing stress, and increasing your insulin sensitivity, all of which can help curb cravings and support your fertility.

So why not give it a try tonight? It's just 10 minutes, and it could make a big difference in your health, wellbeing, and fertility. Ah, who am I kidding, let's not pretend that I'm nice. Stop whinging and walk. WAAAAAAAAAAAAALK.

#### **DAILY TASK**

Walk for at least 10 minutes after dinner.

# DAY 12

## Water



**T**he secret to all beauty and health is eight glasses of water per day. At least this is what all actresses answer when asked to reveal their beauty secrets. Obviously, nobody is using botox or fillers; instead, they all drink eight glasses of magic miracle water that flattens wrinkles.

Jokes aside, of course drinking water is very important for all of us.

- Water helps remove waste from the body.
- Drinking water can reduce overall liquid calorie intake.
- Water is necessary to burn fat. Without water, the body cannot properly metabolise stored fat or carbohydrates.
- Water increases calorie burning. In a 2014 study, 12 people who drank 500 mL of cold or room-temperature water experienced an increase in energy expenditure.

### **How much water should you be drinking?**

Unfortunately, there is no one-size-fits-all formula or magic number that will tell you how much water you must drink. Your body size, outdoor temperature, medical conditions like kidney stones, how heavily you breathe, and how much or less you [sweat](#) can make a huge difference in your water needs.

**BUT...!**

There is always a but, isn't there?

When you haven't been in tune with yourself for a while, it's damn hard to understand your body.

I've been there myself. I went from drinking 1 litre per day with constant headaches to drinking 2.5–3 litres per day without headaches.

I simply ignored my body's thirst cues.

So if that's you, fill up a 1-litre water bottle in the morning. Put one in front of you on your desk so it's within reach.

I don't care if it has bubbles, if it is still, or if it is in the form of herbal tea.

Set a daily timer to 10 a.m., 12 a.m., 3 p.m., and 6 p.m.

Your goal is to finish  $\frac{1}{2}$  = 500 ml of that bottle by 10 a.m.

1 litre by 12 a.m.

1.5 litre by 3 p.m.

2 litre by 6 p.m.

If you haven't finished it when the timer goes off, you've got to drink 500 ml on the spot.

**LEMON WATER:**

I'm a big fan of lemon water. Lemons are packed with vitamin C. One lemon provides you with approximately 50% of your daily Vit. C intake.

Vitamin C promotes iron absorption and progesterone production. Progesterone is needed to sustain a pregnancy!

From now onwards, I'd like you to add the juice of one lemon to  $\frac{1}{2}$  a litre or one litre of water.

### **DAILY TASKS**

- Drink at least 2 litres of water daily.
- Drink at least 250 ml of lemon water before your breakfast. Take whatever you haven't finished to work.

# DAY 13

## Tracking Nutrients



**T**here are many vitamins and minerals necessary for reproduction. Unfortunately, our western diets lack many of them. Nutrient deficiency is one of the major causes of infertility.

Nutrient deficiency manifests in all sorts of diseases. Over time, it leads to inflammation, poor immune function, osteoporosis, thyroid dysfunction, etc.

On the other hand, nutrient overload, particularly in refined carbohydrates and saturated fats, can lead to chronic inflammation, cardiovascular diseases, and insulin resistance.

These days, our diets combine both. We consume far too many nutrient-depleted refined processed foods high in fat and carbohydrates.

Estimating how much is appropriate to consume can be difficult. When it comes to food and drinks, humans tend to get things completely wrong and either over- or underestimate their intake.

This is why I'd like you to use a food scale and temporarily weigh all of your food and drink. ALL of it. It's temporary!

This will give you a good sense of how many nutrients you're actually consuming and which ones are lacking.

If you don't weigh properly, you most likely underestimate what you consume. If you under- or overestimate a few things are going to happen:

- Your daily vitamin and mineral intake will be inaccurate.
- You think you're eating enough but you're not.
- You think you're eating little but you are actually overconsuming.

Don't worry. You won't have to weigh and measure for the rest of your life!!! Just for now, look at it as a great tool to figure out how to nourish your body in the best way possible.

The food scales can be a helpful tool to make sure you

- Eat enough nutrients to help with fertility.
- Learn portion sizes by weighing foods regularly. This will also make it much easier for you to recognise portions when dining out.
- Recognise that not all calories are created equal, and some foods are going to be more beneficial for your fertility than others.
- Make it obvious that those little things you eat can add up considerably.
- To easily recognise the right amount of food necessary to nourish your body.

Learning these important lessons about food will help you get healthy and fertile in the long run. When you're confident that you know how to nourish your body for overall health and fertility, you can simply stop using the scales.

Get into the habit of immediately weighing all ingredients, either in the cooking process or when plating your plate. Weigh cooked vegetables, rice, potatoes, fish, eggs, and meat after cooking, and things like oats or chia seeds before soaking.

## **Nutrient tracking app**

For nutrient tracking, I personally like the app Cronometer the best. Unlike other apps, it gives you the ability to see your intake of up to 82 micronutrients and, therefore, the ability to identify deficiencies. You will need this information in your fertility journey, which is why I'd like you to use it over another app.

I'm not affiliated with Cronometer. I like it because it gives you tonnes of detailed information on nutrient intake and is so much more detailed than other apps. I use it personally and also use it when working with my clients.

If you are used to My FitnessPal, you will notice that within Cronometer you cannot differentiate between meals unless you pay for the premium version. Foods are entered as one long list.

This means unless you pay, you cannot differentiate between breakfast, lunch, or dinner separately, but just the single ingredients you've been eating overall throughout the day. This doesn't really matter because, for our purposes, we only need to look at the nutrient panel.

However, I suggest paying for the premium version for three months. \$30 is well invested, if you ask me.

Within the app, you can create custom foods and recipes, which makes logging the things you eat on a regular basis easier.

Be precise.

It's worth noting that there are many errors when it comes to food assessment. We are all prone to making errors in estimating. The data you receive is only as good as what you enter.

Be precise.

**CAUTION:**

DO NOT log exercise.

Never. Ever.

Based on the data you give, the app will calculate the number of calories appropriate for you. It asks you about your activity level and calculates exercise into your TDEE. Although I don't want you to count calories, it is good to know that the TDEE calculation includes exercise.

Example: The app calculates that you could eat 1900 calories for weight maintenance. Now you go and enter your cardio session. It might assume that you burned 350 calories in that session and will add this to the 1900 calories. This will bring your recommended daily calorie intake to 2250 calories.

However, if you eat 2250 calories that day, you will be in a caloric surplus because your TDEE of 1900 calories already includes exercise.

You do not need to eat back your exercise calories.

1. Your TDEE / maintenance calories already include exercise calories. If you log the exercise separately, it will falsify your data within the app.
2. The calorie-burn feature within any food logging app sucks and isn't accurate.

So get into the habit to LOG ONLY food and drinks.

Now, go and forget calories.

We will only track macro- and micronutrient intake to bring your fertility back on track.

This will give you a fairly good idea of what it takes to eat all the nutrients your body needs to make a baby and where you may need supplementation.

## DAILY TASKS

- Download the app Cronometer from your app store.
- Weigh all food and drink.
- Use the app Cronometer to log and track your food and drink intake.

# DAY 14 – 21

## Feeling Full



### Macronutrients

**C**arbohydrates and fats have been demonised but there is not one single macronutrient responsible for obesity.

Our bodies have a great way of regulating what we should be eating. In hunter-gatherer tribes, nobody worries about how much fat, protein, or carbohydrates they should be eating to function and survive. They also don't have our modern diseases. Why is that?

Some tribes eat mainly meat; some tribes eat mainly plants. It doesn't seem to matter.

It raises the question:

Can our bodies recognise the heavily industrialised food that we eat in our modern society as food?

Can this highly processed and engineered food send the same fullness and satiety signals to our hypothalamus as a sweet potato or a steak?

Get it out of your head that carbohydrates make you fat and sick. The same applies to fat.

The next big thing is protein, according to the list of scaremongering. The claims range from: protein making you age faster, you increase your risk of heart disease, and some claim that we don't need much protein for our well-being and that it destroys our health. Others scream that an animal protein source is bad for the planet and that you are also a cruel monster if you consume it.

Instead, you are supposed to reach for the vegan, highly processed, genetically modified soy plant burger.

Yes, we need to look after our animals far better than we do. It's an absolute nightmare how we disrespect the beings around us.

We also need to understand that processed vegan crap isn't the answer to health problems and might do more harm than good. I told you that you might get triggered, didn't I?

Some foods make you feel full for longer, whereas others will make you crave more food quickly.

Limiting the foods that don't satisfy you and most of the time replacing them with filling foods that don't make you want to eat more will be a simple but effective game changer.

As you probably know, there are three macronutrients: carbohydrates, proteins, and fats.

Protein and fat are essential, which means you cannot live without them. Carbohydrates are not essential and are sort of optional in the human diet. This is why diets like carnivore or keto, where there are no or very few carbs but high fats are utilised, work. They actually work quite well as a short-term intervention.

However, just because something can be done doesn't mean it should be done or should be done forever. For example, I believe that veganism is a great intervention diet too, but it can also potentially lead to some major deficiencies without proper supplementation.

The best diet provides all nutrients through food. A good diet doesn't lead to deprivation. Feeling deprived leads to binges. Binges lead to weight gain and lots of other health problems. For these reasons, I will never promote anything other than a balanced, unprocessed, whole-food diet, including foods from plants and animals.

Obviously, if you are intolerant or allergic to some foods, you need to exclude them. If food is causing a negative effect on your body, you should not consume it if you don't want the negative effect. Intolerances and allergies can lead to severe inflammation. If you've done this programme successfully but still cannot get pregnant, I recommend eliminating instead of limiting all inflammatory foods.

The biggest offenders are artificial trans fats, gluten and dairy products, vegetable and seed oils, eggs, and peanuts. Unfortunately, there are lots of other things that can have an impact on your fertility. If an elimination diet doesn't help, you might have to dig deeper. Work with someone who looks behind the curtain to find the root cause.

## **Carbohydrates**

When you eat, your body uses carbohydrates first. Once it's done with the carbohydrates, it starts to use protein and then fat.

I could write an essay on carbohydrates alone, but let's make it as simple as possible.

You can divide carbohydrates into two categories: simple and complex carbohydrates.

Simple carbohydrates:

- Absorb very quickly into the blood.
- Provide a source of quick energy.
- Burn through pretty quickly and leave you feeling hungry fast.

Complex carbohydrates:

- They take more work for the body to digest them.
- High in fiber which allows stool to flow easily through the digestive tract.
- Reduce bloating, gas, and constipation.
- Allow more toxins being eliminated from the body.

Complex carbohydrates are also sugar," but they come in larger sugar molecules plus fibre and other nutrients, including vitamins and minerals. This combination helps to slow down digestion and moderates a whole flood of biochemical reactions that affect your fat storage, blood sugar levels, and appetite.

All carbohydrates are reduced to monosaccharides by enzymes in your small intestine. Your body only absorbs glucose, fructose, or galactose.

You'll learn more about carbohydrates as you go along in the programme.

## **Fats**

Fat is an essential macronutrient for optimal health and well-being, but it has gotten a bad rep over the years.

I dare say that the health problems in our society come neither from fat nor carbohydrates. The problem is the combination of both macronutrients.

Try to find food in nature that combines high carbohydrates with high fat content. You won't find many, and if you do, they come with a hell of a lot of fibre to slow down digestion.

This alone should tell you all you need to know. We aren't supposed to eat lots of food that contains both fat and carbohydrates.

Food that contains both lots of fat and carbohydrates activates the reward system of the brain. It sort of hijacks your body's inborn signals governing food consumption and can make you keep eating in spite of being full.

What are processed foods made of? Mostly fat and carbohydrates!

No wonder; you are never satisfied and overeat on cookies, cakes, fast food, etc.

It's not you. It's literally your brain being wired to overeat these types of foods.

The food industry knows it. The food industry isn't there to make you healthy. A business is there to make money. Any business. So they will find ways to make you eat more and more so you keep buying their stuff, which makes them rich and you sick.

## **Protein**

Your body requires protein. Proteins are organic molecules made of amino acids that help with building muscle, tissue repair, creating enzymes, and boosting hormones. We have essential amino acids, which are the ones that the body can't make, and thus we must consume them in our diets. We've also got non-essential amino acids that the body can typically produce on its own.

### **Why is it important to get enough protein?**

- Proteins are the building blocks of our bodies.
- Heals and rebuilds muscle.
- Important for developing a healthy egg and for implantation.
- Essential for the growth and development of your baby during pregnancy.
- Keeps you full and satiated (400 calories of beef will leave you way more full than 400 calories of chocolate).
- Significantly boost metabolism (can amount to 80–100 more calories burned each day).

Without an adequate protein intake, our bodies can't function at all. Consuming protein can also increase levels of the hormone glucagon. Glucagon is released when blood sugar levels go down. This causes the liver to break down stored glycogen into glucose for the body. This means glucagon can help control body fat.

Do you remember TEF—the Thermic Effect of Food? Different foods require different amounts of energy to break down. Our bodies need more energy to break down protein than to break down carbohydrates or fat. In other words, protein has a significantly higher TEF than carbs or fat. 20–30% of ingested energy is spent metabolising protein, whereas carbohydrates use 5–10% and fat needs 0-3%.

In other words - your body burns more calories when digesting protein.

Meat is a major source of B vitamins like thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B6, and vitamin B12 and minerals such as zinc, selenium, and iron.

More reasons to prioritise protein are

- Protein lowers your blood sugar.
- Protein preserves lean body mass.
- Protein reduces cravings and desires for late-night snacking.
- Overeating protein results in much less stored body fat than overeating carbohydrates.
- A breakfast high in protein raises your brain's tyrosine levels, which help produce neurotransmitters dopamine and norepinephrine, which give you energy and make you feel awake and alert.

Eat protein for each meal of the day (even snacks), but especially at breakfast. This helps to increase the release of satiety hormones, curbing your appetite and making you feel fuller for longer.

Sources of protein include

- Meat
- Poultry
- Fish
- Seafood
- Eggs
- Dairy foods (limit or avoid when trying to conceive - it may lead to inflammation)
- Soy (limit or avoid when trying to conceive - it may alter your oestrogen levels)
- Chia Seeds
- Quinoa
- Oats
- Nuts (no more than 1 handful a day; keep in mind that many people have an intolerance to some nut varieties without knowing it, with peanuts being the worst offenders)
- Legumes

## **How much protein should you eat?**

Simply have a protein source at each main meal.

One protein source 3 x day.

We could make it complicated and get the calculator out and calculate the exact amount of protein based on your height and weight. We can also make it as easy as possible for you.

Measure your source of protein with the scales and have the following:

Protein Sources per meal:

150g ( $\frac{2}{3}$  cup) of poultry, fish, meat

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup of veggie protein like lentils beans or pulses

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup of tempeh/tofu

2-3 eggs

## **Essential vitamins and minerals for conception found especially in protein sources**

It is crucial for your fertility that you meet your daily requirements of all essential vitamins, dietary minerals, and several other types of nutrients every day.

Natural vitamins and minerals are always superior to synthetic ones.

Rely on food rather than supplements.

The app Cronometer allows you to track the intake of vitamins and minerals daily.

DAILY TASK:

Check whether you've hit 100% of the vitamins and minerals mentioned below. If you do, their Cronometer bar will be green.

### **CAUTION:**

Do not record any supplements within the app. This will falsify your data. You already know what kind of minerals and vitamins you take in the form of tablets. Now let's find out how many vitamins and minerals you're actually receiving from food sources.

a) Iron

- essential for growth, development, and metabolic functions, such as making hormones and neurotransmitters.
- creating haemoglobin, which carries oxygen through your bloodstream.
- amenorrhea (the absence of your period) can be caused by iron deficiency anaemia.
- deficiency has also been associated with anovulation (the lack of ovulation) and ovulatory disorder fertility.

- low levels of iron lead to anaemia and also contribute to low levels of conception.
- builds the blood levels in the body, and aids in fertility, and also balances ovulation.

Food Sources: Beef Liver, Red meat like Beef, Pork, and Lamb, Chicken, Salmon, Tuna, Eggs, Red kidney beans, Edamame beans, Chickpeas, Tofu, Broccoli, Dried apricots

#### b) Zinc

- aids male fertility by improving the number and quality of reproductive cells.
- favours the implantation of the fertilised egg cell in the uterine wall and helps carry the pregnancy to term.
- may prevent early miscarriages.
- prompts the pituitary gland to release follicle stimulating hormones (FSH).
- promotes ovulation and stimulates the ovaries to produce progesterone.

Food sources: Beef Liver, Red Meat like Beef, Lamb, and Pork, Shellfish, Hemp Seeds, Pumpkin Seeds, Sesame Seeds, Squash seeds, Dark chocolate, Pine Nuts, Peanuts, Cashews, Almonds, Eggs.

#### c) Vitamin B12

- supports ovulation.
- helps with egg fertilisation and implantation in the uterine lining.
- contributes to foetal development, DNA synthesis, and neurological development.
- required to successfully carry the pregnancy to term.

By the way, in men, a deficit has been shown to cause low motility and a low count of reproductive cells. If you are deficient before conception, chances are the foetus will also suffer from a B12 deficiency.

Food sources: Beef liver (, lamb liver, pork liver, beef, mackerel, clams, king crab, milk, lamb, tuna, oysters, octopus, herring, trout, mussels, sardines, beef kidneys, lamb kidneys, pork kidneys, wild-caught salmon.

**SUPERFOOD** Beef Liver: If there is such a thing as a superfood on planet Earth, then it is beef liver. Liver is a premium source of vitamins and minerals that play a crucial role in your fertility, like vitamins C, D, and E, Co-Q10, zinc, and folate. It's got a special taste, and often people hate it. But taste buds change after you've eaten something often enough. So give it a go in small amounts and persist. I promise it'll taste better every time you eat it. It might never become your favourite food, but you will be able to eat it without gagging.

A word of caution: If you do become a beef liver lover before pregnancy, please be careful with consumption when you get pregnant. Beef liver is absolutely packed with vitamin A. High levels of vitamin A can build up in your body and may be harmful to your unborn baby.

#### d) Folate (Vitamin B9)

- supports foetal development during pregnancy.
- prevents premature labour and neural tube defects. These are severe birth defects in the form of openings in the spine or brain or missing portions of the brain. They can cause paralysis, blindness, deafness, or even the death of the infant.

If you don't get enough folate, neither does your baby. If you start off deficient, your baby might suffer as a result of the deficiency. Sufficient folate intake is absolutely crucial during early pregnancy to reduce the risk of brain and spine defects.

Food sources: Beef liver (260 mcg of folate per 100g), brussels sprouts, dark leafy greens, asparagus, oranges, kidney beans, black-eyed peas, and peanuts.

Vitamin B12 or folate deficiency can cause anaemia. Not enough vitamin B12 or folate can result in the body producing abnormally large red blood cells that cannot function properly.

Symptoms of Vit B12 and Folate anaemia deficiency:

- Extreme tiredness
- Lack of energy
- Pins and needles
- Sore and red tongue
- Recurrent mouth ulcers
- Muscle weakness
- Disturbed vision
- Depression, anxiety and confusion
- Memory loss, problems with understanding and judgement

Supplementing Folate:

It is important that we aim to get all our nutrients from food. If you take a general multivitamin without there being a deficiency within your body, you will pee out water-soluble vitamins and create very expensive urine. In the worst case, excess fat-soluble vitamins remain within your body and are stored in the liver. This can cause unnecessary harm.

It is absolutely possible to consume enough folate through food sources.

However, because folate is one of the key nutrients in a baby's early development, for adult women planning a pregnancy, it is recommended to supplement with 400 to 1,000 mcg of folate a day.

Lots of prenatal vitamins contain folic acid instead of the more bioavailable form, methylfolate. Folic acid is the synthetic form of folate and may not be properly metabolised by those with the MTHFR gene mutation. Excess unmetabolized folic acid can lead to toxicity, which in turn may lead to blocking of the receptors and transporters by the folic acid. The MTHFR mutation occurs in about 10% of North American, European, and Australian populations, but is probably widely undetected, and the percentage of people suffering from it may be much higher.

This is why I believe it is better to supplement with methylfolate instead of folic acid.

Methylfolate is the more active form of folate. It is well absorbed by your body, if not better, and can definitely effectively raise folate levels. This means that people without the mutation also benefit from consuming methylfolate instead of folic acid.

### **DAILY TASKS**

- Eat  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup (150 g) (measured cooked) of a protein source 3 times per day.
- Eat 50-100g of beef liver 4 times per week (stop that when you get pregnant).
- Monitor iron, Vit B12, zinc, and folate in Cronometer. Your goal is to hit 100% of the vitamins and minerals mentioned. When you do, their Cronometer bar will be green.

# DAY 22-29

## Improving Gut Health



**I**mproving your gut's health is a game changer.

It's THE step to a happier reproductive system, a happier gut, and a happier you.  
What's your gut got to do with the health of your womb?

Your gut microbiome regulates circulating oestrogen.

Inactive oestrogen is either sent to the intestine for elimination or is eliminated in the urine. When your gut microbiome has too many enzymes that help to reactivate oestrogen, it can happen that the oestrogen in your gut gets reabsorbed back into the bloodstream and gets back into action.

Proper digestion is crucial for our fertility because the digestive system breaks down nutrients so our body can absorb them. If our digestive system doesn't function properly, we won't absorb the nutrients the body needs for a well-functioning reproductive system.

However, digestion doesn't start in our colon. The digestion of food and drink starts in our mouth. On its way out, it will activate organs like the liver, pancreas, and gallbladder. Digestive issues like constipation are the result of incomplete digestion. This effect is not limited to our gut. The health of our pancreas or liver is as affected as the health of our colon.

Digestive issues like constipation could be due to a

- Lack of stomach acid (trouble breaking down protein)
- Lack of or too much bile (trouble digesting fat)
- Lack of "good" microbes (trouble breaking down fibre and other nutrients)

## **PROBIOTICS and PREBIOTICS**

Inside the human gut is a field of trillions of bacteria called the microbiome. There are more than 30,000 different species of bacteria living in our gut. Some of these tiny little creatures are called probiotics.

It's like any ecosystem—the good comes with the bad, and all have a job to do. You might not like spiders, but they eat bugs and flies. Without spiders, we'd be bombarded with little critters. You might not like mice, but they are a staple food for many animals.

Probiotics/bacteria can be found in certain types of food, like sauerkraut, kimchi, and yoghurt. When we eat these foods or take probiotic supplements, we can increase the number of healthy microbes living in our gut. If we don't have enough probiotics in our gut, our once-healthy ecosystem gets out of balance and creates issues.

Damage to the gut microbiome correlates with

- Metabolic problems like weight gain, diabetes and cancer.
- Respiratory problems like asthma, lung cancer, and obstructive pulmonary disease.
- Autism, mental health problems like anxiety and depression, psychiatric disorders, pneumonia.
- Cardiovascular problems like atherosclerosis, heart failure.
- Skin problems like psoriasis, acne, skin cancer.
- Immune system problems.
- Hormonal imbalances.
- Infertility.
- Inflammation.
- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS).

### **What does it take to have a healthy microbiome?**

You just have to feed the probiotics. If you feed them, they can increase their population. If they don't find enough nourishing food, they won't reproduce.

What do probiotics eat? Probiotics eat prebiotics. Another name for prebiotics is fibre (not all fibre is prebiotic, though). Fibre must travel through the GI tract undigested and promote the growth and/or activity of specific "good" bacteria in the large intestine in order for it to be classified as a prebiotic.

### **FIBRE - the secret of a “skinny bitch”**

Fibre creates a feeling of fullness in your stomach. This feeling is incredibly important to feeling satisfied with a meal.

Most fibre is a form of carbohydrate derived from plants and, by definition, cannot be absorbed by the human body. It goes through you.

However, it can be broken down by the microbes in our gut.

Fibre comes in two forms. Soluble and insoluble fibres.

Both have a purpose, and eating both helps with diversity. Diversity increases the range of bacteria in your gut, which leads to a healthier microbiome and therefore healthier fertility.

Soluble fibre can dissolve in water, helping slow digestion and the absorption of sugars.

Food sources include lentils, nuts, oats, and certain fruits and vegetables.

Insoluble fibre does not dissolve in water but attracts it. They have a laxative effect, soften stools, and make it much easier to have bowel movements.

## **BEST SOURCE OF FIBRE: VEGETABLES**

Get your fibre first and foremost from vegetables. Why shouldn't you get it solely from fruit?

The recommended amount of fibre per day is 35 grammes. If this fibre is coming solely from fruit, we'd be consuming about 143 grammes of sugar, or 10 teaspoons of sugar.

Do I have to say more?

## **START SLOWLY**

I usually eat 600–1000 grammes of veggies and fruit combined each day. That's heaps of fibre. My gut has had time to adjust over the years and can process it now. But if your diet lacks fibre, this amount might give you trouble.

If you do bloat, please back off. In the beginning, it's much more important to not bloat than to eat a shitton of veggies your system cannot handle yet.

Reducing the toxic load on your body means excluding things that make your body work overtime. Bloating is a sign that your microbiome works hard and needs support. Let's take it easy and support the system instead of stressing it.

Start off small and gradually increase the fibre intake.

A very important mineral for peristalsis, the movement of your bowels, is potassium. Make sure you include these food sources in your diet.

Food sources potassium: Bananas, Potatoes, Sweet potatoes, Avocados, Turkey, Leafy greens, Dates, Dried apricots.

Fibre that is usually easier to digest

- Carrots
- Beets
- Sprouts
- Zucchini/summer squash
- Spinach and other salad greens
- Butternut, acorn and other winter squash like kabocha
- Cucumbers

Foods high in fibre

- Reduce your cravings for sugar and other sweet foods.
- Raise your blood sugar levels slowly and steadily.
- Keep you feeling full, therefore you most likely eat less without any effort.

Constipation:

My personal favourite stool softener is flax seeds.

Flax Seeds health benefits:

- High in fibre
- High in omega-3 fatty acids

Whole flaxseeds are difficult for the body to digest and absorb due to their tough outer shell, which is rich in insoluble fiber. When consumed in their whole form, flaxseeds may pass through the digestive system undigested, and their nutrients may not be fully absorbed by the body. This is why flaxseeds are often recommended to be ground before consumption to enhance their digestibility and nutrient availability.

When flaxseeds are ground, the outer shell is broken down, allowing for better digestion and absorption of the nutrients within, including healthy fats, dietary fiber, and other beneficial compounds.

Now it's up to you if you want to grind them or not.

If you don't grind them, your body will poop them out as they came in.

I never grind them. The whole seed is a perfect tool to soften stools and add volume to a diet.

If you consume them as a whole, please don't track them in the app Cronometer. They won't give you much nutrient or calorie counts.

If you grind them, please enter them into the app. Be aware that due to their high fat content, ground flax seeds are high in calories.

Other great sources of soluble and insoluble fibre include:

Sweet potatoes, carrots, non-starchy vegetables, such as lettuce, cucumber, tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower and mushrooms, seeds like pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, chia seeds, whole grains like oats, fruit such as apples, pears, legumes, such as beans, split peas, and lentils, nuts.

Ideas:

- Add chia seeds to a smoothie
- Make vegetable-based soups
- Eat a mix of whole nuts and seeds as a snack
- Add seeds to a salad
- Eat veggie stick with hummus as a snack

I recommend that you steam your veggies for the next 7- 14 days. The cooking process helps break down the food before you even put it in your mouth. This helps your body with digestion and leads to less bloating.

Having 1–2 tablespoons of fermented vegetables like sauerkraut or kimchi can also help your gut microbiome.

Fermented vegetables need to be raw and unpasteurized to actually contain good probiotics and prebiotics, the stuff that supports the growth of your good gut microbes. Homemade is best, but if you cannot be bothered, check the label for raw and unpasteurized—probably found in the fridge section rather than on a shelf.

## **DAILY TASKS**

Have 3 cups (300 g) of cooked or raw non-starchy vegetables (they usually grow above ground, except carrots) at 2 meals per day.

This makes a whopping 6 cups (600g) of vegetables per day.

## **Essential vitamins and minerals for conception found especially in veggies**

### **DAILY TASKS**

- Have two pieces of fruit per day.
- Monitor the following vitamins and minerals in the app Cronometer. Your goal is to

hit 100% of the vitamins and minerals mentioned below. When you do, their Cronometer bar will be green.

#### a) Vitamin C

- helps maintain hormonal balance
- increases progesterone levels
- may be involved in the development of the corpus luteum, a structure that secretes progesterone. Progesterone is the hormone that makes it possible for the pregnancy to develop. Low levels of progesterone will make it very hard to get pregnant.
- Vit. C appears to accumulate in the reproductive organs, protecting against free radicals and subsequent DNA damage that may result in defects leading to pregnancy loss and chromosome abnormalities
- Vit. C also may indirectly support reproductive system health and fertility by the ability to aid tissue repair

Food sources: Guava, red pepper (capsicum), green pepper (capsicum), oranges, strawberries, papaya, broccoli, pineapple, potato, brussels sprouts, kiwi, mango, cantaloupe, cauliflower, lemon.

#### b) Vitamin D

- important for fertility, pregnancy outcomes, and lactation
- may stimulate the production of both oestrogen and progesterone
- higher Vitamin D levels to contribute to higher pregnancy rates in vitro fertilisation (IVF)
- deficiency can result in pregnancy complications such as infections, gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, premature labor, and miscarriage
- deficiency can also affect a baby and may result in asthma, low birth weight, low bone density, and rickets

When your skin is exposed to sunlight, it makes Vit. D. It produces more Vit. D when you expose yourself to the sun during the middle of the day, when the sun is at its highest point in the sky.

Since few foods naturally contain vitamin D, it's best to spend regular time outside in the sun and let your body produce Vit. D this way.

Food sources: Beef Liver, Cod liver oil, Salmon, Swordfish, Tuna fish, Sardines, Egg Yolk

#### c) Vitamin E

- reduces free radical damage in both female and male reproductive cells
- improves motility and thus aids in conception
- increases the thickness of the uterine lining (the endometrium may be too thin to support a pregnancy), reduces miscarriage rates

Food Sources: Sunflower seeds, Almonds, Hazelnuts, Pine Nuts, Peanuts, Salmon, Crayfish, Fish Roe, Octopus, Lobster, Cod, Avocado, Rainbow Trout, Red Sweet Pepper, Brazil Nuts, Mango, Kiwi, Blackberries, Beet Greens, Broccoli, Butternut Squash, Mustard Greens, Asparagus, Swiss Chard, Spinach

#### d) Selenium

- improves motility
- protects egg cells from free radical damage that may result in failed conception, miscarriage, or chromosome abnormalities causing birth defects
- plays a major role in preventing thyroid disease

Food Sources: Brazil Nuts (1 per day is often enough to exceed your selenium needs), Tuna, Halibut, Sardines, Shrimp, Beef Liver, Turkey, Chicken, Brown Rice, Eggs

#### e) Magnesium

- breaks down excess oestrogen
- helps you detoxify through your liver
- responsible for converting the food you eat into cellular energy
- supports stress and sleep
- keeping your cortisol levels under control, so your insulin levels do not spike, which drops your blood sugar
- controls follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH)

Good to know:

The majority of magnesium that is in grains is lost in processing. LIMIT refined grains.

Refined sugar depletes magnesium. LIMIT refined sugar.

Magnesium levels decrease before your menstruation. Consider magnesium supplementation in the menstrual luteal phase.

Foods with protein enhance the absorption of magnesium and calcium. Eat enough protein.

Food Sources: Spinach, Swiss chard, Lima Beans, Tuna, Brown Rice, Almonds, Dark chocolate, Avocado, Bananas, Pumpkin seeds, Flax seeds, Quinoa, Atlantic mackerel, Atlantic pollock, Salmon, Halibut

## SUMMARY DAILY TASKS

- Have 6 cups (600 g) of cooked or raw non-starchy vegetables per day.
- Have two pieces of fruit per day.
- Have 1-2 Brazil nuts per day.
- Monitor iron, Vit. B12, zinc, folate, Vits. C, D, E, selenium, and magnesium in Cronometer. Your goal is to hit 100% of the vitamins and minerals mentioned. When you do, their Cronometer bar will be green.
- Add 2 TBSP of flaxseeds to your diet if constipation is an issue.

# DAYS 30-37

## Prioritising Fish



**F**ish is filled with omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins such as D and B2, calcium, phosphorus, and a great source of minerals, such as iron, zinc, iodine, choline, magnesium, and potassium—essential nutrients when you're trying to conceive and also when you're not. A healthy reproductive system needs the nutrients found in fish.

However, some fish contain dangerously high levels of the heavy metal mercury, which can damage the nervous system. It is important to know which fish is safe to eat and which one to stay away from.

As a general rule, the smaller the fish, the less mercury should be in it. The smaller the fish, the better for your fertility.

If you'd like more information, please visit <https://www.seafoodwatch.org/>.

### “Best Choices List”

Eat 3 servings per week

Anchovy	Herring	Shad
Atlantic croaker	Lobster, american and spiny	Shrimp
Atlantic mackerel	Oyster	Skate
Black sea bass	Pacific chub mackerel	Smelt
Butterfish	Perch	Sole
Catfish	Pickrel	Squid
Clam	Plaice	Tilapia

Cod	Pollock	Trout, freshwater
Crab	Salmon	Tuna, canned light (includes skipjack)
Crawfish	Sardine	Whitefish
Flounder	Scallop	Whiting
Haddock		
Hake		

### “Good Choices List”

Eat no more than 1 serving per week

Bluefish	Monkfish	Tilefish (Atlantic Ocean)
Buffalo Fish	Rockfish	Tuna, albacore/ white tuna, canned and fresh/frozen
Carp	Sablefish	Tuna, yellowfin
Chilean sea bass	Sheepshead	Weakfish / Seatrout
Grouper	Snapper	White croaker/ Pacific croaker
Halibut	Spanish mackerel	
Mahi mahi	Striped bass (ocean)	

### Avoid

- Swordfish
- Shark
- Tilefish from the Gulf of Mexico
- Marlin
- Orange roughy
- Bigeye tuna
- King mackerel

### Essential vitamins and minerals for conception found especially in fish

#### DAILY TASK

Monitor the following vitamins and minerals in the app Cronometer. Your goal is to hit 100% of the vitamins and minerals mentioned below. When you do, their Cronometer bar

will be green.

#### a) Omega 3 fatty acids

- help regulate hormones in the body
- increase cervical mucus
- promote ovulation
- increase the blood flow to the reproductive organs
- During pregnancy, a lack of DHA (one component of omega 3) may be associated with premature birth, low birth weight, and hyperactivity in children.

Food sources: Mackerel, Cod Liver Oil, Herring, Oysters, Anchovies, Salmon, Sardines, Halibut, Shrimp, Snapper, Scallops, chia seeds, Flax seeds, Walnuts, Chia Seeds, Brussel Sprouts, Meats and Dairy from Grass Fed Animals

#### b) Iodine (not measurable within Cronometer)

Iodine is an important trace mineral. IMPORTANT. EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. It needs to be consumed through food, as your body cannot make it. Iodine

- protects the thyroid (thyroid hormones regulate ovulation)
- improves cognition and metabolism
- important for unborn baby's brain development

Food Sources: Seaweed, Cod, Tuna, Oysters, Shrimp, Beef Liver, Chicken, Dairy, Iodised salt

Next to selenium, Vit B2 and B3, iodine is extremely important for your thyroid health.

Symptoms that can indicate an iodine deficiency:

- No white moons (lunala) on the first 4 fingernails (this symptom must be accompanied by other symptoms, as some people are born without white moons).

Missing moons are associated with issues with your thyroid or pituitary gland, iodine deficiency, chronic renal failure, depression, and a possible B-12 deficiency. There doesn't have to be a moon on the small fingernail. The one on the thumbnail should be 25% or less than the total length of the nail from the base to the flesh line at the top.

Before supplementing, I urge you to have your iodine levels, vitamin B-12 levels, thyroid function, and blood pressure checked by a medical professional.

- Swelling of the thyroid gland. The thyroid gland, located in the neck, gets bigger.
- Low levels of thyroid hormones T3 and T4

- Brittle nails
- Weight gain or the inability to lose weight
- Infertility
- Fatigue
- Sluggishness
- Cold intolerance, sensitivity to cold weather
- Problems with concentration and memory
- Constipation
- Slow heart rate
- Dry skin, hair thinning or loss
- Menstrual irregularities
- Mood disorders, depression
- High cholesterol
- Fibrocystic Breast tissue
- Breast Cancer



Healthy moons on fingernails

Supplementing Iodine:

One could go down a huge rabbit hole when researching if the recommended daily intake (RDA) of 150 micrograms for adults is enough for a healthy body.

While the RDA levels are sufficient for preventing goitre, in my opinion, they may not be effective supporting optimal thyroid, endocrine, and immune system function.

I'd also like to mention that fluoride, bromide, and chlorine significantly inhibit iodine uptake. Exposure to these detrimental halogens has increased. This means if your intake of iodine is 150 mcg but you're also ingesting fluoride, bromide, and chlorine, these 150 mcg won't get where they need to go in your body.

The official dosage:

RDA (the Recommended Dietary Allowance): Adults and adolescents: 150 mcg/day;  
Pregnant and lactating women: 250 mcg/day.

The unofficial dosage reports:

Dasgupta, et al. report that on average, people in Japan have an iodine intake ranging between 700 and 3,200 µg/d with excellent thyroid health. By the way, iodine plays a key role in healthy breast tissue. Women in Japan have a 65% lower risk of breast cancer than women in the US.

The National Institutes of Health guidelines say the safe upper limit for adults is 1,100 micrograms of iodine per day. It's my personal opinion that this amount may be the better choice to support optimal thyroid, endocrine, and immune system function.

In my own health journey I started with a lower dosage of 300 mcg daily and made my way up to 1000 mcg daily over the course of 4 weeks.

If you do decide to supplement iodine please do not take a supplement that contains just iodine.

To be effective it is recommended to take a full natural combination of potassium iodide and iodine, which is also known and sold under the name Lugol's.

Iodine has a synergistic relationship with selenium. It also requires other vitamins and minerals, such as selenium, B2, and B3 to support its vital role which means you may also supplement these vitamins or eat enough foods that provide these benefits.

When supplementing with iodine please make sure that selenium levels are also sufficiently high. Consuming 1-2 brazil nuts per day may provide enough selenium.

**WARNING:** People who take too much iodine can go into renal failure, metabolic acidosis, hypotension, the collapse of blood circulation, and death. Excessive iodine intake can also cause thyroid problems. For those who have thyroid disease, have experienced iodine deficiency over many years, or are taking other medications, a supplement should not be taken without discussion with a doctor.

Before supplementing with iodine, please have your iodine levels checked and work with a medical professional to get the dosage right. Iodine levels are checked with an inexpensive urine test. One can really screw up their thyroid with too much intake. So do yourself a favour and go and see a medical professional of your choice. This is not a disclaimer to cover my ass, but strong advice!

### **RECOMMENDED TASK**

Have your iodine levels, vitamin B-12 levels, thyroid function, and blood pressure checked by a medical professional.

### **DAILY TASKS**

- Eat fish from the “best choice” list 3 times per week.
- Monitor iron, Vit. B12, zinc, folate, Vit. C, D, E, selenium, magnesium, and omega 3 in Cronometer. Your goal is to hit 100% of the vitamins and minerals mentioned. When you do, their Cronometer bar will be green.

Unfortunately, Cronometer’s database on iodine may not be sufficient to track your intake.

# DAYS 38 – 52

## Improving Digestion



### LIVER

**O**ur health is significantly influenced by our liver's health. It is in charge of removing toxins and other dangerous components from our blood. Additionally, it aids in digestion, produces hormones and proteins, and controls cholesterol and blood sugar.

Additionally, our liver stores vital nutrients like vitamins, iron, and glucose and converts sugar into a usable form of energy when our body requires it. The liver's duties include destroying old blood cells and breaking down haemoglobin.

With everything that has been mentioned above, it is obvious that our liver also has a significant impact on our fertility.

A weary, clogged, and overworked liver can manifest a wide range of symptoms.

- anger or irritable mood
- low energy
- weight gain
- a tendency to have random episodes of general melancholy, headaches, or bodily pains without a known reason
- unable to balance hormones appropriately in the absence of any contributing fertility-related health conditions
- constipation, poor digestion, and nausea following meals (particularly after consuming fatty/oily foods)
- skin problems, including itchiness, some liver spots, swelling with bags under the eyes, a faint yellow tint, and acne
- fatigue/weariness without having overexerted oneself

A diet poor in fibre and lacking in fresh, whole vegetables, as well as excessive consumption of dairy, highly processed oils, alcohol, and refined sugars, are major causes of liver sluggishness.

No, it's not fat.

Poor liver health is also a result of repeated use of NSAIDs, antibiotics, and tranquilizers, as well as exposure to poisons and chemicals in the environment.

## How to Improve Liver Health

Good news: The liver has the capacity for self-renewal and regeneration. Phew!

Depending on how badly it is damaged, this could take a while—generally between three months and a year. Optimal nutrition is the best protection for our liver and the key to its healing.

- Fresh vegetables, especially sea vegetables and dark green leafy vegetables, are foods high in chlorophyll that improve liver health and function.
- Fibre comes from whole grains, beans, and legumes. Helps to absorb excess bile and supports regular elimination, including elimination of excess hormones like oestrogen.
- Sprouts, whole grains, nutritional yeast, legumes, nuts, and seeds
- Foods high in potassium: dried fruits, some seafood
- Foods high in sulphur: garlic, onions, cage-free eggs, cruciferous vegetables
- Enzymes and probiotics are found in fermented foods like kefir and raw, unpasteurized sauerkraut, and kimchi.
- Clean, filtered water
- Bitters that stimulate digestion: artichokes, beetroots, radishes, and their greens, endive and arugula

## Foods that harm your liver if consumed in abundance:



Alcohol



Soda



Refined  
Sugar



Refined  
Grains



Conventional  
and low-fat  
and non-fat  
Dairy  
products



Fried foods  
high in  
saturated /  
trans fats

No, these foods won't harm your fertility if consumed infrequently on a rare occasion.

However, if you do consume them daily, they may harm your reproductive system.

This is not rocket science.

And you know this already.

If cheese and wine on their own were inherently bad, the French would have gone extinct by now.

If bread and beer would ruin your reproductive system forever, German people would not exist.

The problem is overconsumption and overeating.

### DAILY TASK days 38 - 45

**For one week**, pick one of the options above daily and have no more than one serving of it per day.

#### 1 serving =

200ml of alcohol

200ml of soda (I don't care if this stuff comes sugar free by the way - soda is soda, end of story)

50g of anything with refined sugar (chocolate, cake, donuts, etc.)

50g of anything with conventional dairy

1 slice of white bread

1 small bowl of chips

## **DAILY TASK days 46 - 52**

Have no more than **three servings** of the options above **PER WEEK**.

## **Top herbs / supplements for liver repair**

### **Milk Thistle**

One of the most effective herbs for the liver is milk thistle. An essential antioxidant called silymarin is found in milk thistle seeds.

Milk thistle supports and protects the liver by improving its daily function and detoxification. It also aids in repairing liver cell damage brought on by disease, alcohol, and narcotics.

The active ingredients in milk thistle have been shown in numerous studies to be a promising treatment for chronic liver disease. Studies have shown that milk thistle supplements can reduce liver inflammation and damage and neutralise free radicals, the unstable electrons generated by your environment, stress, and diet. Free radicals can cause serious damage to your cells, as well as speed up the ageing process and increase your risk of disease.

### **Artichoke Extract**

Artichokes contain compounds that clear the buildup of toxins and eliminate them from the liver and the body. Most importantly, they stimulate the flow of bile, which assists your liver in eliminating toxins from the body.

### **Turmeric Extract**

One of the world's best anti-inflammatory herbs, turmeric is not simply a potent antioxidant. Its active component, curcumin, has been demonstrated to aid in the treatment of liver damage brought on by chronic inflammatory diseases. It can also clear blocked bile ducts.

### **Dandelion Root Extract**

Dandelion root appears to boost the flow of bile. According to a 2017 study, dandelion root has significant polysaccharides that may help liver function. Another mouse study found that dandelion root extract greatly slowed the development of liver fibrosis.

### **N-Acetyl Cysteine (NAC)**

NAC is a very powerful supplement and is even used in hospital settings. It helps to detoxify the kidneys and liver and may prevent or diminish existing damage. NAC is taken one to three times daily in doses of 600 to 1200 mg. It can be taken with or without food.

Please consider taking NAC and a liver cleansing supplement that includes the ingredients mentioned above.

## **Supplement Brands that I like**

In general, I recommend the brands THORNE, mindbodygreen (they work together with Thorne), Pure Encapsulations, Vimergy, Gaia, EU natural, Nature's answer, Solgar, Life Extension.

For liver cleansing purposes I recommend GAIA Herbs Liver Cleanse combined with Thorne's NAC.

## **BILE**

Bile is a fluid that absorbs fatty acids and aids in fat digestion. Additionally, it removes pollutants and extracts fat-soluble vitamins such as A, D, E, and K. The liver makes bile, which the gallbladder stores. Various enzymes are also required for food digestion. The pancreas produces these enzymes.

Bile won't be released if the stomach isn't acidic enough. Potentially, food literally rots in our stomachs without good digestion.

Symptoms that indicate a lack of bile:

- Stool floats
- Nausea after eating fatty foods
- Pale, yellowish coloured stools
- Gallstones
- Full sensation over the right lower rib area that can refer to the right shoulder
- Burping
- Belching
- Bloating
- Gas

## **How to improve bile flow and help to digest fats well?**

- Eat more healthy fats.
- Eat bitter foods as they are great at stimulating bile production (celery, radish, dark green leafy vegetables, beetroot, artichokes).

- Drink roasted dandelion root tea, ginger tea, lemon tea, celery juice, and coffee (yes, coffee; nothing is inherently bad).
- Fresh lime or lemon juice helps flush the liver and gallbladder of congested bile.

### **Top supplements to improve bile flow:**

- Betaine HCL and Ox Bile
- Swedish Bitters (a collection of bitter herbs) are also great for bile production and are best taken 10-15 minutes before each meal.

Suggested brands for bile improving supplement:

Thorne Research, Bio-Gest

## **The difference between good and bad fats**

### **Industrial Seed Oils**

Contrary to what we've been told, industrial seed oils such as soybean, canola, and corn oils may not be "heart healthy". They are refined, bleached, and deodorised oils, or RBDs for short.

Healthy fats are an essential part of healthy living, but most plant-based oils are extracted with a solvent called hexane, a petroleum byproduct. Hexane can cause damage to the nervous system.

Don't be fooled by the certified organic label. Even these oils can be heavily refined with toxic chemicals!

In the production process, these oils oxidise and turn into trans fats. The smell is so rancid that a cleaning process has to take place using bleach to deodorise it.

### **Avoid refined oils like:**

- Canola oil
- Cotton Seed Oil
- Vegetable oil
- Rapeseed Oil
- Soybean
- Safflower oil
- Corn oils
- Margarine (or any other 'buttery' spread)
- Crisco

Trans fats should be avoided. Where do you find them? Approximately 95% of prepared cookies, 100% of crackers, and 80% of frozen breakfast products contain trans fats. Leave that shit out of your body. Yep, I called it shit. End of story. Bake yourself so you know what's in there.

On the contrary, healthy fats should be eaten. Healthy fats help you produce bile.

## **The only cooking oils in my kitchen:**

### **For salads**

- Extra virgin olive oil, cold pressed

### **For cooking**

- Coconut oil
- Lard
- Beef Tallow
- Organic grass fed butter
- Organic grass fed ghee
- Sesame oil, extra virgin (best used for low-heat sauteing)
- Hemp oil, Walnut oil, Flaxseed oil
- MCT oil

In case you are wondering which oil I use for deep frying: I don't deep fry.

Consider purchasing an air fryer.

## **How much fat should you eat per day?**

All sorts of foods contain fat. You will find fat in meat and fish, not just in oil or butter.

However, to make it as easy as possible, let's put foods into categories. Although, for example, meat and fish can be high in fat, I want you to think of them as protein sources first and foremost. Why? From experience, we don't stick to things that get too complicated. It's as simple as that. Usually people put butter immediately into the fat source category, although -- surprise, surprise -- it also contains protein. Make your life simple:

Meat = Protein, Butter = Fat

Have 4 fat servings per day.

The fat requirement is to be divided between two or more meals.

**Choose from the following servings:**

Oil → 1 tablespoon

Butter → 1 tablespoon

Mayonnaise → 1 tablespoon

Salad dressing → 2 tablespoons

Nuts → 1 handful (approx. 20g)

Seeds → 1 handful (approx. 20g)

Avocado → ½ avocado

Olives → 5 olives

Sour cream → 2 tablespoons

Cream cheese → 1 tablespoon

**DAILY TASK days 38-52**

- Drink one cup of dandelion root and ginger tea per day.
- Have 4 fat servings per day.

# DAYS 53 – 60

## Lowering Blood Sugar



**T**heoretically, humans can survive without eating carbohydrates. Ever. Your body would be able to use protein and fat as fuel.

However, just because it can be done doesn't mean it is a good idea. Especially not if you are a woman.

For most people, eating carbohydrates is not the problem; the excess consumption of carbohydrates, especially those low in fibre, is.

- Carbohydrates are our bodies' preferred (and most efficient) energy source.
- Adequate carbohydrates in your diet protect your muscles from being broken down and used as energy.
- Carbohydrates high in fibre promote gut microbiome diversity, gut health, and good digestion.
- Carbohydrates improve your mood and relaxation levels. They increase your brain's tryptophan levels, creating our happy hormone serotonin.
- Carbohydrates eaten at dinner improve the quality of your sleep because serotonin is a precursor to melatonin (the main hormone impacting sleep).
- A diet low in carbohydrates can negatively impact our concentration, memory, and performance.
- Pairing complex carbohydrates with a protein source can help you remain satisfied until lunch, reducing your urge to have between-meal snacks.

However, carbohydrates also raise your blood sugar levels. Food that does raise your blood sugar quickly can cause lethargy and hunger, and you end up eating more.

Over time, it may leave your body struggling to lower your blood sugar effectively, which can lead to insulin resistance or type 2 diabetes and screw up your hormones and your fertility.

You don't have to eat keto to lose weight or improve insulin resistance. However, it helps to lower your overall carbohydrate intake and also limits eating carbs from sources that don't do our health a tremendous favour; instead, eat more from the ones that help us poop and keep our blood sugar stable.

Reducing carbohydrate intake reduces the amount of insulin circulating in the body and therefore reduces insulin resistance.

## **What is the favoured choice of carbohydrate?**

Anything that does NOT spike your blood sugar levels sharply and has not been stripped of almost all nutrients, vitamins, minerals, and especially fibre is a good choice.

## **Examples of foods you may want to REDUCE from now on:**

Refined carbohydrates like table sugar, white bread, white rice, pastry, chips, soda, candy, breakfast cereals, and desserts.

No, no, don't cry. I said to reduce. I didn't say to avoid it.

It's about eating consistently good, nourishing food, which leaves room for meals that don't nourish your body. Eat your cake or your chocolate bar. Do not deprive yourself.

The "I cannot have it ever again or I get fat or die or look like shit" mentality WILL lead to overeating. Stop that. You can have your treat whenever you want it.

There is no shortage of it, is there? You could eat that cake for breakfast tomorrow if you like.

But I'm sure that by now you are choosing your fertility. Choosing your fertility doesn't mean you cannot have cake; it just means that you choose to eat mostly nutritious food.

REMINDER: Aim for consistency, and not perfection. It counts what you do most of the time and not so much what you do sometimes.

Next time you eat a McDonald's burger, simply remind yourself that it most likely won't make you full for long and that it is designed to make you crave more. It's not your lack of willpower that makes you want more. It's literally the food that overrides your body's hunger cues and will make you crave more. When you make the choice to eat something like this, you need to be fine with that.

And when you get hungry after a couple of hours, you will know why and simply eat something your body appreciates.

## **BEST CHOICE carbohydrate source to lower blood sugar:**

Eat smart carbs = Low-glycemic index (GI) carbohydrates.

A high-GI meal like eating cake accompanied by soda drives your blood sugar twice as high as a low-GI alternative such as overnight oats with raspberries and cinnamon.

Low-GI carbs are higher in fibre, therefore they release sugar more slowly into the blood instead of spiking it, giving insulin more time to work efficiently.

Advantages of a mostly low-GI diet:

- Feel energetic, not cranky.
- Turn off sugar cravings.
- Maintain a healthy body for good.
- Drop pounds without even trying.

If you'd like to take out the guesswork, please download my fertility-friendly food list. This list contains foods that are low in glycemic index.

[Download FERTILITY FRIENDLY FOOD LIST here](#)

Whatever is not on the list is simply not a low-GI food. This means if it's not on this list, consider it a food you eat no more than 2-3 times per week.

If you cannot be bothered with a list to figure out which carbohydrate is the best choice, here is a simplified version:

**CHOOSE** mainly vegetables, whole fruits, and a moderate portion of whole grains.

**LIMIT** white potatoes, potato chips, white rice, fruit juices, soda, canned fruit, refined grain products like cookies, white bread etc. (includes literally all fast food).

**TIP** to further improve insulin sensitivity:

Spread your carbohydrate intake throughout the day and eat a bit of carbs at each meal instead of having a huge carbohydrate load at one meal only.

## **How many carbohydrates per day should I consume?**

Because carbohydrates come in all sorts of shape and forms and I'd like to make things easy for you let's differentiate by name. Let's call starchy vegetables starch/grain and the non-starchy ones vegetables. This means that we call a starchy potato a starch/grain and broccoli a vegetable.

From now on, you will eat 2 servings of starch/grain.

**Choose from the following servings of starch/grain:**

1 slice of bread

½ cup of any of the following grains, measured after cooking:

- Amaranth
- Barley
- Bulgur
- Brown rice
- Buckwheat
- Couscous
- Cream of rye
- Grits
- Kamut
- Millet
- Oats
- Oat bran (1/2 c. raw = 1 cup cooked)
- Oatmeal
- Quinoa
- Rice
- Rye
- Spelt
- Wheat

1 cup of any dry cereal such as:

- Puffed brown rice
- Puffed corn
- Puffed millet
- 3 rice cakes = 1 serving

½ cup of Starchy Vegetables:

- Baked or boiled or mashed potato
- Cooked beans (lima, navy, all dried beans)
- Cooked corn (kernel)
- Mashed yams
- Parsnips
- Peas
- Pumpkin
- Sweet potato
- Squash like acorn, butternut, hubbard, winter and spaghetti squash

**DAILY TASK**

Have 2 starch/grain servings per day.

# Days 61- 68

## Three meals per day



**T**he way you eat can either help or hinder you from maintaining stable blood sugar levels. It is important what you eat, but it is also important when you eat.

As the day goes on, insulin sensitivity drops. Eating later in the day can also affect your circadian rhythms. This is why it's best to eat large meals early in the day.

Longer food breaks give your pancreas a needed pause from making insulin and storing energy. Your whole system can take a breather instead of constantly working overtime.

A study published in the *Diabetes Journal* in 2019 compared six meals a day with three meals a day in individuals with diabetes. They observed that the participants who ate six meals per day did not lose any weight and did not see better blood sugar control. However, those who followed the 3 meals a day diet saw the opposite effect: they lost weight, had much improved blood sugar levels, reduced their appetites, and saw a significant reduction in HbA1c.

### **DAILY TASK**

Eat no more or less than three meals a day.

### **12 - 14 hour Food Break**

You may have heard that intermittent fasting (time-restricted eating) can improve your metabolic health by lowering insulin resistance. The most popular method is 16:8, which means you fast for 16 hours and eat within 8 hours.

If you've followed me for a while, you know that I'm not a huge fan of the usual fasting methods for various reasons, including:

- I've seen too many women consistently struggle to stick to it, which puts the methods sustainability and tolerability into question.
- Our hormones can be messed up very easily. Research has shown that fasting can alter the communication pathway between our brain and ovaries, leading to a hormonal imbalance. You are here to balance your hormones, not make them messier.
- Fasting can affect your cortisol (stress hormone) levels and therefore lead to more anxiety, sleepless nights, and the dreaded sugar cravings. Nobody needs more of these when they're already dealing with infertility.
- It can affect your thyroid health.

Fasting can be done safely and is very effective throughout the female cycle. However, I am a big believer in sustainability and making things as effective but also as easy as possible.

Research has shown that 12 to 14 hours of fasting per day very effectively lowers insulin levels in pretty much everyone.

12–14 hours are easy. You can do this by simply not eating for 12–14 hours after dinner and fasting until breakfast. You could have the last bite to eat 8 p.m. and have breakfast at 8 a.m. You sleep for 7-8 hours, so the other 2-4 hours should be a walk in the park.

### **DAILY TASKS**

- Eat no more or less than three meals a day.
- Do not eat or drink anything other than water for 12-14 hours between your last meal of the day and your first meal the next day.

## **SUMMARY Food**

### **DAILY**

- Drink at least 2 liters of water.
- A protein serving at each main meal 3 x a day.
- 6 cups ( ≥600 g) of cooked or raw non-starchy vegetables (they usually grow above ground, except carrots).

- 2 pieces of fruit.
- 4 fat servings.
- 2 starch/grain servings.
- One cup of dandelion root and ginger tea.
- Eat 3 meals per day. Do not snack. Have 12-14 hours between your last meal of the day and your first meal the next day.
- Go for a walk for 30-60 min at a steady pace of 5km/h (3mph) at least 3 times a week.

## **WEEKLY**

One fish serving (low in mercury) 3 times per week.

Now I will make it even easier for you. Below, please find a structured and very easy-to-follow meal plan that takes out all the guesswork and requires almost no thinking from your side.

Sounds great, doesn't it?

## **Your meals should be like this by now:**

### **Breakfast**

1 protein serving

1-2 pieces of fruit

1 cup milk or milk substitute

1 starch/grain serving

### **Lunch (4 hours after breakfast)**

1 protein serving

1 starch/grain serving

3 vegetable servings

2 fat servings (10-12 grams fat total)

### **Dinner (5 hours after lunch)**

1 protein serving

3 vegetable servings

1 starch/grain serving

2 fat servings (10-12 grams total)

### **1 Snack (if needed)**

1 piece of fruit

1 cup milk/dairy or milk substitute or 1 handful of nuts/seeds

## **Serving sizes**

### **Vegetables**

1 cup (115 g / 4 oz. weighed) of raw vegetable or

½ cup (100 g / 3.5 oz. weighed) of cooked vegetable is counted as a vegetable serving.

Only the low-starch vegetables are usually used as vegetable servings; the starchy vegetables (corn, peas, winter squash) are usually considered starch/grain servings.

## **Fruit**

1 piece of fruit means a moderate piece of fruit, 170 g / 6 oz. / 1 cup of cut-up fresh or frozen fruit

## **Rules for Blood Sugar Stability:**

- No more than 2 starch/grain servings per day.
- 2-3 pieces of fruit per day.
- 12-14 hours of Food Break per day.
- No more than 3-4 meals per day (preferably 3).
- Include protein in each meal.

Eat smart carbs = Low-glycemic index (GI) carbohydrates.

## **Starch/Grain**

Have 2 starch/grain servings per day.

Choose from the following servings of starch/grain:

1 slice of bread

½ cup of any of the following grains, measured after cooking:

- Amaranth
- Barley
- Bulgur
- Brown rice
- Buckwheat
- Couscous
- Cream of rye
- Grits
- Kamut
- Millet
- Oats
- Oat bran (1/2 c. raw = 1 cup cooked)
- Oatmeal
- Quinoa
- Rice
- Rye
- Spelt
- Wheat

1 cup of any Dry Cereal such as:

- Puffed brown rice
- Puffed corn
- Puffed millet
- 3 rice cakes = 1 serving

½ cup of Starchy Vegetables

- Baked or boiled or mashed potato
- Cooked beans (lima, navy, all dried beans)
- Cooked corn (kernel)
- Mashed yams
- Parsnips
- Peas
- Pumpkin
- Sweet potato
- Squash like acorn, butternut, hubbard, winter and spaghetti squash

Prefer whole grain over white cereal, bread, and pasta.

### **Protein**

One serving is

150 g / 5 oz. / ⅔ cup of all meats, poultry, fish

3 eggs (medium)

1 cup cooked beans

170 g / 6 oz. tofu, tempeh

1 tbsp. nut butter

70 g / 2.5 oz. of nuts (peanuts, hazelnuts, cashews, or almonds)

### **Milk/Dairy/Milk Substitutes**

One serving is

250 ml / 9 oz. / 1 cup of unsweetened milk, soy milk, milk alternative, or yogurt

## Fats

Choose from the following servings:

Oil → 1 tablespoon

Butter → 1 tablespoon

Mayonnaise → 1 tablespoon

Salad dressing → 2 tablespoons

Avocado → ½ avocado

Olives → 5 olives

Sour cream → 2 tablespoons

Cream cheese → 1 tablespoon

Nuts → 1 handful (approx. 20g)

Seeds → 1 handful (approx. 20g)

Avoid low-fat and reduced-fat items

Avoid Seed Oils like

- Canola oil
- Cotton Seed Oil
- Vegetable oil
- Rapeseed Oil
- Soybean
- Safflower oil
- Corn oils
- Margarine (or any other 'buttery' spread)
- Crisco

Stick to

For salads

- Extra virgin olive oil, cold pressed

For cooking

- Coconut oil
- Lard
- Beef Tallow
- Organic grass-fed butter
- Organic grass-fed ghee

- Sesame oil, extra virgin (best used for low-heat sauteing)
- Hemp oil, Walnut oil, Flaxseed oil
- MCT oil

Eat no more or less than three meals a day.

Do not eat or drink anything other than water for 12-14 hours between your last meal of the day and your first meal the next day.

# Days 69 – 76

## Moving the Body



**C**armen, didn't you mention I wouldn't have to exercise?

Yep, you don't have to torture yourself with long sessions in the gym. However, humans are designed to move their bodies. It is what it is.

Move your body. Activity is crucial for our health and overall well-being.

I don't care how you move as long as you move.

Use the stairs. Can't be bothered? Get over yourself. Your body wants you to move. If you listen closely, I bet you could hear your body shouting at you: MOOOOVE! So move.

Move especially in sunshine. It's proven that the sun has multiple healing properties far beyond your Vit D levels. But what about wrinkles and cancer? Let's not get carried away; just enjoy a bit of sunshine each and every day and go for a brisk 30-minute walk (whatever brisk means to you at that point) while the sun is shining in your face.

Ride your bike to work. (More sun, yeah.)

Walk to the shops or to the bus station.

Turn up the music and clean your house as fast as you can.

When picking up the phone and the desk is not needed, walk around the office.

Walk whenever you see an opportunity to walk.

Think about your day and see whether you can replace the car and walk somewhere or ride your bike to get somewhere.

What if you can't get motivated?

I hate to break it to you, but there is no motivation. There will never be any. It's something you simply have to do.

I cannot give you motivation, but I can give you advice on how to make it easier on yourself.

Choose an activity that makes you happy.

Walk or be active with a friend.

Pick FUN movement: Don't make it complicated or overthink it; moving your body matters, no matter which way it doesn't.

Remember that you don't want to become the next top model, but you do want to become pregnant. How do we improve our fertility? By being as healthy as possible. It's not healthy to do things you hate. That's adding stress. Stress is adding cortisol, which is damaging to our fertility. So choose a movement that's fun for you.

Pick a great show and allow yourself to just watch it on the stairmaster or when walking on the treadmill.

Listen to your favourite podcast while walking.

Dance in your living room (that's my favourite activity of all time).

## **TASK**

Write a list of all the opportunities in your life to move your body. All of them. Even if they seem unrealistic.

It's 20km to your work, and you wouldn't ride the bike? It doesn't matter—write it down. When you're finished, write down any objections and reasons why you cannot choose this as a physical activity.

After that, imagine you are a personal trainer and gym junkie, or imagine you are David Goggins (look him up if you haven't heard of him—the baddest bad ass in the history of bad asses) and write down convincing counterarguments on how you could make it work.

It goes like this: 20 km is far too much. I'd be dead when I arrived at the office. I am not so fond of riding a bike. Even if I could manage physically, I still would need additional time for a shower, my messy hair, a change of clothes, and riding the whole way back.

Counter arguments: With all the traffic, it takes me over an hour to get to work. It would probably take the same time or just a little more to ride the bike. The additional time for a shower is just 15 minutes. I could put my hair into a ponytail and not worry about it for the day. If I did this, I would have 2 hours of moving my body in my "movement bank". I don't

have to do it every day, but maybe just once per week. I could leave some clothes at the office the day before. I could try it at least once and see how I go instead of being Negative Nelly straight away and assuming it's going to be a nightmare.

The point is for you to bring up good arguments and find ways to make it work.

We are all brilliantly good at talking ourselves out of things.

I want you to talk yourself into it.

Have fun with it. Pretend to be another person and think like this new alter ego. Pretend to be a gym junkie, a mad runner, and/or a personal trainer. She's a bit nuts and does sh\*t that makes you cringe. But she's lovable, funny, and convincing. Be her and persuade yourself how you can make it work to move your body more. She knows your weak spots. Talk about your weak spots and the actions you need to take in order to get over yourself. Talk yourself into it.

In the end, you might decide that the bike ride isn't for you—just right now. You also might decide that it is possible down the road. When you've already come up with solutions to the problem, you're more likely to implement them.

What I am convinced of is that you will find a way to move your body more than you do now. That's all you need to do.

### **DAILY TASK**

Find ways to move your body for at least 30 minutes a day. Every step and minute counts.

Did walking up the stairs to get to your office take you two minutes? Great, 28 minutes to go. Did you visit your friend and walk for 15 minutes instead of taking the car, which would have taken you almost the same amount of time anyway by the time you parked the car? Awesome job! Another 13 minutes left. Did you vacuum your house for 10 minutes? Beautiful. Now jump up and down for another 3 minutes, and you've done it. Well done.

See, it's easy.

### **Movement reduces insulin resistance**

Insulin resistance inhibits your cells from taking up more sugar. It is as if the cells have changed the locks, and the insulin's key doesn't work anymore.

A surefire way to find this important key is by moving your body consistently for 30–60 minutes every day at a consistent pace.

No, it's not killing yourself for 30 minutes with a HITT workout. Especially not in the last quarter of your cycle. It puts too much stress on your body, releases cortisol, and we are back to screwing our precious hormones.

One of the best exercises to beat insulin resistance is walking at a steady pace of 5 km/h (3 mph). That's a brisk walk.

It's not running for 5 minutes, catching your breath for another 5 minutes, and then running again.

It's walking at a steady pace.

Think of your cells as popcorn. You don't heat up popcorn by turning on the heat to high, turning it off, and then turning it back on to high. No, medium-steady heat opens up the kernels.

A medium-steady pace opens up your cells to take up glucose.

And it does it for the whole day.

It's like magic.

You can walk 5 km/h (3 MPH). Yes, you might get sweaty. Yes, it might be a struggle in the beginning, but it will get easier and easier.

You're already improving your sleep by being outside in the sunlight for 20–30 minutes, so you might as well move your body throughout this time instead of sitting around.

You haven't seen your friend for a while? Grab a coffee and go for a walk with them instead of sitting around in a cafe.

#### "DAILY" TASK

Go for a walk for 30 to 60 minutes at a steady pace of 5 km/h (3mph) at least three times a week.

Note: This doesn't replace taking the stairs instead of the elevator or walking to your friend's house. Think of any movement outside the walk as an added health bonus to your strong, beautiful body.

# DAYS 77 – 84

## Lowering Stress Levels further



It's well known by now that emotions can affect our physical bodies. Repression of anger, frustration, and fighting against what's inevitable, or a lack of confidence, can affect organs like the liver but also the reproductive organs. I want to point out that the repression of emotions is the problem, not the emotion itself. We all get angry and frustrated, but denying the feeling and shutting it down seems to have a negative effect on our physical health.

If you'd like to go deeper on this topic, I can highly recommend the following books: "The Body Never Lies" by Alice Miller and "What My Bones Know" by Stephanie Foo. In his book "When the Body Says No," Dr. Gabor Mate also points out that there may be a strong connection between stress and disease.

If trauma alone caused infertility, the human race wouldn't exist anymore. Humans experienced an incredible amount of trauma throughout history, but women were still able to get pregnant.

However, the repression of emotions can manifest as disease. It manifests differently in every single individual. I strongly believe that in some women it may manifest as infertility.

Interestingly, all of my clients have one common denominator: some sort of past trauma that hasn't been dealt with. Sexual abuse, rape, verbally or physically abusive parents, the experience of neglect in childhood, grief, etc., etc.

Expressing and feeling your emotions is an important step in healing your soul and your body. Feeling emotions without being scared of them, without questioning them, and allowing every single emotion to be there, as painful as it may feel, to flow through your body, will eventually set you free.

It is the most liberating feeling to express and feel your emotions. It is incredible when you allow yourself to be you without fear of being judged or not receiving validation.

How often do you shut down an emotion because you aren't sure you'll get approval for it? Maybe you don't want to hurt others. Maybe you don't want to burden others? Maybe you fear no one listens. Maybe you put others first all the time because their feelings seem to be more important than yours. Are their feelings really more important, or are you afraid that they won't like you anymore if you disagree with them?

People-pleasing usually stems from the deep fear of not being loved enough for who you are. You simply may have learned that it is not okay to express your feelings. Your parents may have told you to go to your room when you cried "for no reason" and come out again when you're finished. How often have you heard that you have no reason to cry? Stop crying, or I'll give you a reason to cry.

Believe me, you can be a "good" girl even when you don't do what others expect you to do. And maybe, just maybe, it is also ok to be a "bad" girl. You might question your feelings all the time. You might ask, "Am I good enough as I am?"

You may not even be aware of what you're doing in your head. But unfelt feelings can stay within the body. You might have buried them deep within you, but they are still there, and overtime, they can make you sick.

Go ahead and ask yourself, Why is it that some people get cancer from asbestos exposure but others don't? Why do some people get sick with lung cancer after years of smoking, but another person with the same exposure dies at 96 whilst holding a cigarette in their hand? Some people get their brain fried when abusing alcohol but have a functioning liver; others drink heavily with a functioning brain but their liver fails instead. Why do some people gain weight uncontrollably while others simply cannot gain weight?

I don't know for sure if the underlying root cause of all diseases is our repressed emotions. Nobody does at that point in time. However, based on what I have witnessed in women with infertility, and other much more illiterate people than me will agree, I strongly believe it has more to do with it than we think and know right now.

Yes, nutrition plays a major role in our health, but your mental health is as important if not more.

It's also not possible to avoid stress. We all have stress. However, how we deal with it and how we are able to express it may be the difference between a healthy and unhealthy body.

Stress hormones are part of our delicate hormonal system. The liver's ability to function and the body's capacity to create sex hormones both depend on healthy levels of stress hormones.

The stress hormone cortisol, for instance, increases the body's ability to withstand emotional stress. It also increases endurance and energy production by triggering the liver to convert amino acids into glucose.

On the other hand, excessive cortisol production brought on by long-term stress can impede the body's primary sex hormones, which in turn suppress ovulation, sex drive, and sperm count.

If your past trauma manifests into a constant state of fight or flight, your hormones might go cuckoo over time.

This topic is extremely important but also far too extensive to cover within this book. For the purposes of this programme, we will give the following most effective stress management tool a go:

## **The Illusion Of Control**

Most people believe that they have more control over people, places, and things than they really do. We overestimate our chances of influencing the outcome.

We think we can control other people, events, the environment, and ourselves. Every single day, we're trying to avoid disaster. Every single day we're trying for positive outcomes. Evolutionarily, it makes total sense. We strive to control our environment out of survival instinct.

We build houses to protect us from rain and bad weather. That doesn't stop the bad weather, though. We are training dogs to protect our animals from predators. That doesn't keep the predator from existing, though.

We feel safer when we believe we have control over the outcome. More often than not, we do not have any control at all but act as we do.

Many people frequently criticise themselves for actions they should have taken but didn't, especially when the results were painful. We are certain that things would be different if we could go back in time and apply the information we now possess.

This keeps us in an endless cycle of questioning our decisions, beating ourselves up, and getting highly anxious about future mistakes. In our heads, we are constantly either in the past or the future but never really present at all. The worry about making a mistake leads to anxiety, procrastination, helplessness, and even depression and the inability to move at all.

Let's have a look at the serenity prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr later adopted by AA, Alcoholics Anonymous.

A prayer that might change your life.

**God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.**

Whether you believe in God or not, this prayer applies to all of us.

The only thing you can change and have control over is yourself and your own actions. The problem we are facing is our subconscious belief system. This has been formed a long time ago, mostly by outside influences. Your parents, society, advertising, and all sorts of other things that you accepted as truth when you were a child are still running every single minute of your life. You also cannot change the past, nor can you change the people around you who, to this day, trigger you.

Shit, isn't it? You don't have control over your mother being an unforgiving asshole to you and questioning all your choices, making you feel insecure. She is like she is. She does whatever she likes to do. Can you influence her actions? Certainly. Do you have control over it? No.

However, there is something here that you can control. It's that feeling of insecurity. That's coming out of you. You cannot stop her from doing anything, but you can decide to not feel insecure indefinitely.

It's not going to be easy to make that feeling go away instantly. Things like this are deeply rooted, and getting over them might take time. This is why I wouldn't make it my goal to never feel insecure. Fighting against it will just make it stronger and leave you feeling more frustrated. Don't fight; let it be.

You can allow that feeling to be there AND leave you quickly.

Give it permission to be there and to leave as fast as it came.

Just look at the insecurity.

Where in your body do you feel it?

Let it be there.

Then you could remind yourself that feelings last 90 seconds and go away if we don't entertain them longer with our thoughts.

Your thoughts keep feelings alive. Where there is no thought, there is no feeling.

So, look at the feeling of insecurity, let it be there, and after 90 seconds, stop giving it attention in your head.

Do not ask yourself why she doesn't accept you the way you are. Do not tell yourself you shouldn't have said anything. Do not ask yourself what's wrong with you.

Stop the noise in your head. Stop it, and the feeling goes away. Just like that. It's magic.

You could also be very brave and tell your mother that her words hurt you and made you feel like you weren't enough.

But here comes the important part: When you say it, be aware that you have no control over what comes next. Again, I have no control over what she will do with that information. None whatsoever.

Always look at yourself and ask what you can change within yourself. Because that's the only thing in your control to change: YOU and YOUR ACTIONS.

... accept the things I cannot change: your mother

... courage to change the things I can: my reaction and the words I speak to her

... wisdom to know the difference: constantly reminding myself that I cannot control other people no matter how hard I try.

From today on, I'd like you to say and write down that little prayer each and every morning.

I accept the things I cannot change. I have the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

If you truly live by these words, nothing can affect you anymore. Think about it. You have no control over anything outside of yourself. If you bring everything back to yourself, no matter what happens around you, and let go of everything else and hand it over to whoever or whatever, it can give you a tremendous amount of peace.

Can you control the lunatic who starts a war in another country? No. Your worrying about it won't change a thing. Do you have control over all the viruses going through the world? No. You just have control over your actions by washing your hands regularly and taking whatever preventative measures you'd like to take to minimise the risk of getting sick. That's all you can do.

Look at all you can do and accept the rest as given. If you cannot change it, there is absolutely no point in worrying about it.

We can bring it back to your fertility.

What do you have control over?

You can control what you eat and drink.

You can control how and when you move your body.

You can control the amount of information you gather to take charge of your fertility.

You can control whatever medication or supplement you take or do not take.

You are in control of lots of things.

You are also not in control of many, many more things. And that's ok.

You are not in control of whether you ever get pregnant. Nobody is.

You can do whatever it takes, to the best of your ability, to create a healthy environment. But that's all you can do.

From today onwards:

You accept the things you cannot change. You have courage to change the things you can, and you also have the wisdom to know the difference.

# DAYS 85 – 92

## Inflammation



**C**hronic inflammation may have a role in developing several reproductive issues, including PCOS, endometriosis, and immunological infertility.

Injury, disease, or infection will cause inflammation within our bodies. This is a natural reaction, as our immune cells are turned on by the body to ward off pathogens and accelerate healing. This acute and short-term inflammation is necessary for overall health and survival.

However, chronic (long-term) inflammation can have significant consequences, including infertility.

### **Inflammation and its link to infertility**

- According to a recent study, women with PCOS have higher levels of low-grade oxidative stress, elevated C reactive protein, and advanced glycation end products (AGEs), all of which are indicators of inflammation and early ageing.
- Inflammation is more prevalent in the bodies of women with high insulin levels, another PCOS indication.
- Increased immune cell activity (cytokines and chemokines), higher Cox 2 enzymes, and high prostaglandin levels are all signs of inflammation in endometriosis-affected women.
- Increased NK (natural killer) cells are another indicator of inflammation and are frequently seen in women with immune-related reproductive issues.

Chronic inflammation in the female reproductive tract can cause damage to the fallopian tubes, uterus, and ovaries. It can make it hard for a fertilised egg to implant and grow into a

strong, healthy baby. Inflammation can also interfere with ovulation and our hormone production, therefore leading to hormonal imbalances, anovulations, and infertility.

Inflammation in men may have a negative effect on the amount and quality of their sperm. Oxidative stress brought on by chronic inflammation can result in the death of sperm cells. Additionally, it may result in obstructions in the reproductive canal, decreasing the likelihood of fertilisation by sperm on an egg.

It could be challenging to identify inflammation as an infertility issue. Some typical indications of inflammation include the following: Heartburn or symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome; skin conditions such as acne, rosacea, or eczema; allergies or persistent congestion; body redness or swelling; migraines or tension headaches; and persistently enlarged lymph nodes.

## **Causes of Inflammation**

There are many factors that can contribute to chronic inflammation, including:

- A diet high in sugar, processed foods, and unhealthy fats.
- An imbalance in Omega 3 to Omega 6 fatty acids.
- Chronic stress can trigger an immune response that leads to inflammation.
- Chronic infections, such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Exposure to toxins such as lead, mercury, and pesticides.
- Eating disorders like bulimia nervosa, anorexia nervosa, and binge eating.
- Food intolerances to, for example, gluten, dairy, soy, nuts, eggs.

## **Reducing Inflammation and Improving Fertility**

This whole programme is designed to reduce inflammation in your body. Because we are all individuals, it is not necessary for all of you to avoid gluten and dairy. This is why I will leave the following up to you and your inner wisdom.

If you watch closely, you will know if gluten or dairy are compatible with your body. Especially after almost 3 months of the programme, you will have a better understanding of what is good for your body and what isn't.

### **Consider eliminating gluten**

Gluten is found in grains including wheat, barley, and rye. For people with celiac disease or non-celiac gluten sensitivity, consuming gluten can trigger an immune response. This causes damage to the small intestine and interferes with the absorption of essential nutrients that are needed for overall health but also for the reproductive system.

Symptoms of celiac disease and non-celiac gluten sensitivity can include bloating, gas, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, constipation, fatigue, brain fog, and skin rashes, among others. Unfortunately, celiac disease is also linked to infertility.

If you do experience these symptoms, consider eliminating gluten from your diet for 1-2 months. If you do feel better, you may want to see a doctor to get tested for coeliac disease.

Unfortunately, some people may have an intolerance to gluten without experiencing any obvious symptoms. However, consuming gluten can still cause low-grade inflammation in the body and therefore harm your health. There is some evidence to suggest that a gluten-free diet can reduce inflammation in the body and improve gut health.

This is why I recommend considering a temporary gluten-free diet. This means avoiding all foods containing gluten, including most baked goods, pasta, and processed foods.

## Dairy

There is some evidence to suggest that dairy consumption may contribute to inflammation. However, there is also evidence to suggest that dairy is beneficial for conception. Confusing, right?

If you do experience the following symptoms after dairy consumption, I'd suggest eliminating dairy from your diet for 1-2 months.

- Diarrhoea
- Flatulence (passing gas)
- Abdominal pain
- Indigestion
- Abdominal bloating
- Abdominal distension
- Nausea

If you don't have any symptoms after eating dairy, I'd stick to grass-fed, organic, whole-fat dairy. Dairy products that are organic, grass-fed, and whole-fat are the best options.

Be aware that dairy products like milk and cheese may cause the body to get congested. Dairy foods may make a congestive reproductive problem, such as PCOS or endometriosis, worse. See how your body responds to it. Avoid non-organic dairy products since they may have added hormones and antibiotics that raise the body's oestrogen levels.

## Soy

Soy is known for its oestrogen-mimicking properties. To prevent having a negative effect on your hormonal balance, it is better to stay away from processed soy foods such as soy milk,

soy burgers, soy protein powder, soy chips, soy meats, and soy cheeses. I suggest avoiding soy if you suffer from hypothyroidism.

## **Other inflammation-causing products**

Anything that creates symptoms in your body should be either avoided or drastically limited.

Symptoms include

- Diarrhoea
- Flatulence (passing gas)
- Abdominal pain
- Indigestion
- Abdominal bloating
- Abdominal distension
- Nausea
- Rashes
- Acne
- Sinus issues like a runny nose after eating

Seed oils, which we have covered earlier in the programme, are one of the biggest offenders when it comes to inflammation.

They

1. may create an imbalance of Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids in your body and
2. may create inflammation by how they are processed.

Stay away from them.

# DAY 93

## Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals



**E**ndocrine disrupting chemicals mimic, obstruct, or otherwise interfere with the body's hormones. They have been linked to both hormonal and non-hormonal disorders as well as a wide range of other health problems. They can be found in the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the cosmetics we use on our skin and hair.

### **BPA**

We inhale or absorb xenoestrogens—chemicals that resemble oestrogen—from plastics like BPA. This is connected to infertility and endometriosis and can disrupt the hormonal balance in both men and women. Researchers believe BPA-free plastics may not be any better. Plastic is still plastic and full of other chemicals that could result in lower sperm counts, fewer viable eggs, or even miscarriage.

It is impossible to completely avoid using plastic, but it should be done as little as possible.

### **Sources of BPA and how to avoid it**

#### Food and drinks

- Never microwave plastic.
- Never pour hot food or liquid straight into a plastic container.
- Choose a kettle without a plastic water level indicator.
- Use stainless steel or untreated wood cooking utensils.
- Choose takeout food in cardboard containers or bring your own glass containers to the restaurant.

- Use a reusable coffee cup and water bottle made from ceramic, glass, or metal with a metal or silicone lid.
- Use glass soda-stream bottles.

#### Tap Water

- Avoid tap water (from PVC pipes), but install a water filter that filters BPA, fluoride, pesticides, and heavy metals.

#### Food Storage

- Store foods in glass, ceramic, or metal containers.
- Do not reuse single-use plastic containers as the plastic degrades over time and leaching becomes worse.
- Container has a plastic lid; wait until the food is fully cooled before putting the lid on.
- Avoid freezing food in plastic containers.

#### Receipts

- Avoid handling cash register receipts (electronic receipts are often available these days when needed).

#### Canned Food

- Minimise the use of canned food.

#### Tetra Paks

- Minimise the use of tetra paks where possible (glass bottles are the best alternatives).

#### Cling Wrap

- Cover food with a beeswax wrap or silicone lids (while silicone is generally believed to be safe, always get the highest-quality silicone available to avoid additives that might not be safe).

## Phthalates

Phthalates can be found in vinyl flooring, adhesives, detergents, lubricating oils, automotive plastics, plastic clothing (raincoats), soaps, shampoos, hair sprays, nail polishes, garden hoses, inflatable toys, and some children's toys. They are a group of chemicals that are frequently found in personal care products, cosmetics, plastics, and cleaning products.

They are not mentioned on product labels.

They can enter the body through the skin, inhalation, or to a lesser extent, through the mouth when consuming items that have been exposed to them (or when toddlers chew on toys).

They have been connected to low sperm quality, miscarriage, and endometriosis and can have an impact on the reproductive system.

## **Sources of phthalates and how to avoid them**

### Personal care products

- Use products that are free from artificial fragrance or perfume.
- Avoid perfumes, but use natural deodorants and essential oils as fragrances.

### Cosmetics

- Avoid wearing nail polish.
- Use natural makeup alternatives.

### Cleaning products

- Use fragrance-free, natural products.
- Use phthalate-free detergents and/or wear rubber gloves while using detergents.

### Plastics

- See all tips in the BPA section.
- Minimise contact with plastic (vinyl) garden hoses, toys, packaging, raincoats, etc. by choosing non-plastic alternatives such as wood, rubber, metal, and glass.
- Use a rubber garden hose to water edible plants.
- Avoid vinyl flooring (especially old or damaged).

### Household dust

- Use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter.
- Consider using an air purifier with a HEPA filter.

## **Parabens**

Many cosmetics, such as makeup, hair care, and skin care products, contain parabens, which are typically classified as butylparaben, methylparaben, and propylparaben. They have an estrogenic impact and can enter the body through the skin.

## Sources of parabens and how to avoid them

### Personal care products

- Avoid products that contain parabens; the biggest offenders are toothpaste, sunscreen, body lotion, facial lotions and cleanser, hand soap, and hair products.
- Avoid packaged foods or read the ingredients to ensure they are paraben-free.
- Use products that use essential oils.

### Cosmetics

- The biggest offenders are mascara and lipstick.
- Use natural alternatives.

## Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs)

These are flame retardants that are found in a variety of consumer products like TVs, toasters, mattresses, carpet, furniture, and computers. They have been prohibited in Australia since 2005, however, they might still be in imported goods.

However, DecaBDE is still produced and used in the U.S., primarily in television casings. Flame retardant manufacturers in the U.S. voluntarily stopped producing the PentaBDE (used in furniture foam) and OctaBDE (used in electronic products) varieties of PBDEs in 2004 and have since started producing alternative flame retardants.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has classified decaBDE as a potential human carcinogen.

PBDEs also take a long time to decompose, which means that they could stay in household dust.

## Sources of PBDEs and how to avoid them

### Household dust

- Use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter.
- Consider using an air purifier with a HEPA filter.
- Damp dusting and wiping surfaces of equipment
- Allow adequate ventilation and good airflow, particularly in rooms with computers.
- Regularly clean air conditioner and heater inlets and vents.

### New furniture

- Check if PBDEs are used in the product.

## **Pesticides**

Research has shown that pesticides have a range of hormonal impacts for both men and women, impacting fertility.

### **Non-Organic Fruit and Veggies**

- Eat organic fruits and veggies as much as possible, especially peaches, grapes, nectarines, pears, apples, strawberries, and tomatoes.
- Grow your own veggies, herbs, and fruits.
- Wash conventional fruit and veggies well, or peel or remove the outer layer of leaves.
- Aim for variety in your diet.

### **Tap water**

- Install a water filter that filters BPA, fluoride, pesticides, and heavy metals.

## **Heavy Metals**

Lead, mercury, and cadmium are examples of heavy metals that can affect hormones and cause lower fertility in both men and women. Avoiding sources is important because heavy metals are difficult for the body to clear and can last a long time.

## **Sources of heavy metals and how to avoid them**

### **Fish**

- Avoid shark (flake), billfish (swordfish, marlin, broadbill), tuna, barramundi, ray, ling, catfish, gem fish, and orange roughy.
- Eat more small fish (40cm) like herring, sardines, anchovies, salmon, snapper, blue grenadier, whiting, leather jacket, halibut, cod, mullet, mackerel, ocean trout, pilchards.

### **Tap water (lead)**

- Install a water filter that filters BPA, fluoride, pesticides, and heavy metals like lead.
- Let the water in the taps run for 30 seconds in the morning or after returning from vacation before drinking.

### **House walls painted prior to the 1980s**

- Leave it as is or follow government guidelines when renovating.

## Cadmium

- Stop smoking (obviously).

## SUMMARY Programme

[Download a printable summary of the programme HERE](#)

### DAILY

- Drink at least 2 liters of water.
- A protein serving at each main meal 3 x a day.
- 6 cups ( ≥600 g) of cooked or raw non-starchy vegetables (they usually grow above ground, except carrots).
- 2 pieces of fruit.
- 4 fat servings.
- 2 starch/grain servings.
- One cup of dandelion root and ginger tea.
- Eat 3 meals per day. Do not snack. Have 12-14 hours between your last meal of the day and your first meal the next day.
- Go for a walk for 30-60 min at a steady pace of 5km/h (3mph) at least 3 times a week.

### WEEKLY

One fish serving (low in mercury) 3 times per week.

### Meal plan:

#### Breakfast

1 protein serving

1-2 pieces of fruit

1 cup milk or milk substitute

1 starch/grain serving

#### Lunch (4 hours after breakfast)

1 protein serving

1 starch/grain serving

3 vegetable servings

2 fat servings (10-12 grams fat total)

### **Dinner (5 hours after lunch)**

1 protein serving

3 vegetable servings

1 starch/grain serving

2 fat servings (10-12 grams total)

### **1 Snack (if needed)**

1 piece of fruit

1 cup milk/dairy or milk substitute or 1 handful of nuts/seeds

## **Serving sizes**

### **Vegetables**

1 cup (115 g / 4 oz. weighed) of raw vegetable or

½ cup (100 g / 3.5 oz. weighed) of cooked vegetable is counted as a vegetable serving.

Only the low-starch vegetables are usually used as vegetable servings; the starchy vegetables (corn, peas, winter squash) are usually considered starch/grain servings.

### **Fruit**

1 piece of fruit means a moderate piece of fruit, 170 g / 6 oz. / 1 cup of cut-up fresh or frozen fruit

### **Starch/Grain**

1 slice of bread

½ cup of any of the following grains, measured after cooking:

- Amaranth
- Barley
- Bulgur
- Brown rice
- Buckwheat
- Couscous
- Cream of rye
- Grits
- Kamut
- Millet
- Oats
- Oat bran (1/2 c. raw = 1 cup cooked)
- Oatmeal
- Quinoa
- Rice
- Rye
- Spelt
- Wheat

1 cup of any Dry Cereal such as:

- Puffed brown rice
- Puffed corn
- Puffed millet
- 3 rice cakes = 1 serving

½ cup of Starchy Vegetables

- Baked or boiled or mashed potato
- Cooked beans (lima, navy, all dried beans)
- Cooked corn (kernel)
- Mashed yams
- Parsnips
- Peas
- Pumpkin
- Sweet potato
- Squash like acorn, butternut, hubbard, winter and spaghetti squash

### **Protein**

One serving is

- 150 g / 5 oz. / ⅔ cup of all meats, poultry, fish
- 3 eggs (medium)
- 1 cup cooked beans
- 170 g / 6 oz. tofu, tempeh
- 1 tbsp. nut butter
- 70 g / 2.5 oz. of nuts (peanuts, hazelnuts, cashews, or almonds)

### **Milk/Dairy/Milk Substitutes**

One serving is

250 ml / 9 oz. / 1 cup of unsweetened milk, soy milk, milk alternative, or yogurt

## **Fats**

Choose from the following servings:

Oil → 1 tablespoon

Butter → 1 tablespoon

Mayonnaise → 1 tablespoon

Salad dressing → 2 tablespoons

Avocado → ½ avocado

Olives → 5 olives

Sour cream → 2 tablespoons

Cream cheese → 1 tablespoon

Nuts → 1 handful (approx. 20g)

Seeds → 1 handful (approx. 20g)

## **Rules and recommendations**

Prefer whole grain over white cereal, bread, and pasta.

Eat smart carbs = Low-glycemic index (GI) carbohydrates.

Have 2 carbohydrate servings per day.

Avoid low-fat and reduced-fat items.

Avoid Seed Oils like

- Canola oil
- Cotton Seed Oil
- Vegetable oil
- Rapeseed Oil
- Soybean
- Safflower oil
- Corn oils
- Margarine (or any other 'buttery' spread)
- Crisco

Prefer

### **For salads**

- Extra virgin olive oil, cold pressed

### **For cooking**

- Coconut oil
- Lard
- Beef Tallow
- Organic grass-fed butter
- Organic grass-fed ghee
- Sesame oil, extra virgin (best used for low-heat sauteing)
- Hemp oil, Walnut oil, Flaxseed oil
- MCT oil

### **Rules for Blood Sugar Stability**

- No more than 2 starch/grain servings per day.
- 2-3 pieces of fruit per day.
- 12-14 hours of Food Break per day.
- No more than 3-4 meals per day (preferably 3).
- Include protein in each meal.

Eat no more or less than three meals a day.

Do not eat or drink anything other than water for 12-14 hours between your last meal of the day and your first meal the next day.

Have your iodine levels, vitamin B-12 levels, thyroid function, and blood pressure checked by a medical professional.

### **Reduce intake of**

refined carbohydrates like table sugar, white bread, white rice, pastry, chips, soda, candy, breakfast cereals, and desserts.

Remember, reducing doesn't mean avoiding! Aim for consistency and not perfection.

### **Consider:**

N-Acetyl Cysteine (NAC) and a liver cleansing supplement that includes Milk Thistle, Artichoke Extract, Turmeric Extract, and Dandelion Root Extract.

### **Supplement Brands that I like:**

THORNE, mindbodygreen (they work together with Thorne), Pure Encapsulations, Vimergy, Gaia, EU natural, Nature's answer, Solgar, Life Extension.

For liver cleansing purposes I recommend GAIA Herbs Liver Cleanse combined with Thorne's NAC.

### **Top supplements to improve bile flow:**

- Betaine HCL and Ox Bile

- Swedish Bitters (a collection of bitter herbs) are also great for bile production and are best taken 10-15 minutes before each meal.

**Suggested brands for bile improving supplement:**

Thorne Research, Bio-Gest

Download my fertility-friendly food list. This list contains foods that are low in glycemic index.

[Download FERTILITY FRIENDLY FOOD LIST here](#)

If you cannot be bothered with a list to figure out which carbohydrate is the best choice, here is a simplified version:

**CHOOSE** mainly vegetables, whole fruits, and a moderate portion of whole grains.

**LIMIT** white potatoes, potato chips, white rice, fruit juices, soda, canned fruit, refined grain products like cookies, white bread etc. (includes literally all fast food).

Find ways to move your body for at least 30 minutes a day. Every step and minute count.

Go for a walk for 30 to 60 minutes at a steady pace of 5 km/h (3mph) at least three times a week. Note: This doesn't replace taking the stairs instead of the elevator or walking to your friend's house. Think of any movement outside the walk as an added health bonus to your strong, beautiful body.

From today on, I'd like you to say and write down that little prayer each and every morning: I accept the things I cannot change. I have the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Eliminate anything that may cause inflammation.

Avoid or limit endocrine disrupting material.

# Herbs, Supplements, and Natural Therapies



**H**erbs and nutritional supplements can give your body the boost it needs to achieve optimal reproductive health. However, herbs must be used with caution, especially if they are contraindicated during pregnancy. Any herbs that are harmful during pregnancy must be stopped once you begin trying to conceive.

## Herbal support:

**Milk thistle seed (*Silybum marianum*)** detoxifies, repairs liver damage, increases bile production, and enhances digestion. Milk thistle is frequently included in fertility cleanses and detoxes.

Burdock root (*Arctium lappa*) detoxifies and nourishes the liver, therefore aiding in hormonal balance.

**Dandelion root and leaf (*Taraxacum officinale*)** detoxifies the liver, increases bile flow, helps manage oestrogen dominance, and improves skin conditions like acne. Dandelion leaf is nutrient-packed and nourishing to the liver.

**Chicory root (*Cichorium intybus*)** is rich in inulin, which is a prebiotic that feeds the good bacteria in your gut. It's a great source of vitamin B6 and manganese.

**Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)** is a bitter herb that is anti-inflammatory, helps liver detoxification, and is known for its antioxidant properties. It can help support our hormone balance and fertility and reduce the effects of ageing on our cells.

**Schisandra berry (*Schisandra chinensis*)** protects the liver; improves vitality and energy levels; has the ability to improve circulation and promote healthier blood cells; has anti-inflammatory and protective antioxidative properties. Helps libido.

**Ginger (Zingiber officinale):** In one study, men who ate ginger increased their sperm motility by 47.3%, their sperm count by 16.2%, and their sperm volume by 36.1%.

**Evening Primrose Oil** is known for balancing hormones and increasing cervical mucus, which helps improve your chances of getting pregnant.

**Cinnamon** helps stabilise blood sugar, which also balances your hormones. It can help regulate the menstrual cycle and lessen severe bleeding throughout your period. Also, it helps your body's circulation and reproductive system function more effectively.

**Stinging nettle** is a fantastic detoxifier and works wonders to tone the uterus in advance of conception. It contains numerous important vitamins and minerals. The best way to consume nettle is as a tea or infusion. Alternatively, you can pick fresh nettles (be careful to wear gloves), mix them into your smoothie, and make sure to blend well.

**Red Raspberry Leaf** has lots of benefits for labour as well as fertility. It improves blood flow, tones the uterus, improves digestion, and has an anti-inflammatory effect on the body, which helps reduce inflammation in the reproductive system. Usually consumed in the form of tea.

**Red Clover:** Consumed in capsules or as a tea, red clover balances your hormones and helps to restore the natural PH level of your uterus. It is a great herb for a fertility cleanse.

**Dong Quai** comes in capsules and as a powder. It increases blood flow to the pelvic area, is an uterine tonic, balances hormones, and can prevent premature ejaculation in men.

**Asparagus Extract:** Strong diuretics like asparagus are used to cleanse the kidneys and detoxify the body. Moreover, it has a lot of folate, which is crucial for a healthy pregnancy. Asparagus has also been shown to help with sperm count. It's either available in capsules or you can simply eat more asparagus.

**Ashwagandha** has been recommended by Ayurveda practitioners for ages to increase fertility and general wellness. It is stress- and anxiety-relieving and helps with blood sugar control. It promotes menstruation in women with long cycles. Take it for no longer than two months and give yourself a break of at least two weeks before you start using it again. Please check with your medical professional because it may interact with some medications.

**Maca** helps boost libido and increases energy and stamina. Maca assists in regulating oestrogen and other hormones in the body, therefore boosting the number of mature eggs during ovulation and supporting a healthy pregnancy.

**Tribulus** is excellent for raising sperm count and enhancing male fertility. It can aid in the reduction of ovarian cysts and is particularly beneficial for women suffering from PCOS.

**Yarrow:** As a uterine stimulant, it promotes healthy menstruation and can help you regulate your cycle. Yarrow is especially beneficial with a long cycle. Moreover, it might lessen painful periods and lighten heavy periods.

## Supplements:

**DHEA (Dehydroepiandrosterone):** This prohormone, a hormone whose job it is to help produce oestrogen and progesterone, is produced in the brain, ovaries/testicles, and adrenal glands. DHEA supplementation can increase levels of testosterone in the body. Too much testosterone can induce ovulatory diseases like PCOS, but because it promotes the growth of ovarian follicles, which are the tiny sacs that house immature eggs, too little of this "male" hormone can also affect ovulation and the development of eggs. Research has shown that it can increase the likelihood of conception in women with diminished ovarian reserves, which includes higher follicle counts and more eggs retrieved.

**CoQ10 (coenzyme Q10)** is produced naturally by the body, used for cell growth and maintenance, and also has antioxidant properties. There's some evidence that, for women with low ovarian reserves, CoQ10 fertility supplements along with DHEA can improve conception.

**Evening Primrose Oil** is anti-inflammatory, may help improve cervical mucus production, improves PMS symptoms, and supports regular ovulation.

**Inositol** is a type of sugar found in foods such as nuts and beans, fresh fruits and vegetables, and grains. In addition to being a crucial component of cell membranes, it affects the brain's production of the neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin as well as the function of the hormone insulin. Inositol is an especially powerful reproductive supplement for women with PCOS.

**Vitamin D3** is actually a prohormone and not a vitamin. It helps absorb calcium into the bones and plays a part in cell growth and muscular function. It supports the immune system and helps to reduce inflammation. While it is unclear how it affects fertility, the correlations between blood vitamin D levels and conception rates are well established. A study involving 1,191 women found that those who had adequate levels of vitamin D in their blood were more likely to experience clinical pregnancy than those who had insufficient levels.

**Omega-3 fatty acids** regulate hormones important for ovulation. Increases blood flow to the uterus and reduces inflammation in the body. It improves the ability of the embryo to implant in the uterus.

**Iodine:** Test your iodine levels before blindly supplementing. Iodine is used to produce thyroid hormones. The thyroid hormone is involved with a baby's brain development.

**Folate (Vitamin B9)** is an essential vitamin that helps with neural tube development in pregnancy.

**Magnesium** helps insulin sensitivity and ovulatory function. Balances progesterone and oestrogen. Magnesium deficiency can cause spasms in the fallopian tubes, which can prevent egg implantation.

My favourite forms of magnesium are

- Magnesium L-threonate (easily absorbed; may help manage certain brain disorders);
- Magnesium glycinate (easily absorbed; may help reduce anxiety, depression, stress, and insomnia);
- Magnesium taurate (which may play a role in regulating blood sugar and supporting normal blood pressure)
- Magnesium citrate (most bioavailable, but be careful; it has a natural laxative effect)

**Choline** is essential for foetal brain development and neural tube formation, helps regulate hormone levels and supports healthy ovarian function, reduces the risk of birth defects in developing foetuses, and plays a role in DNA synthesis and cell division, which are essential for healthy foetal development.

**L-carnitine** improves sperm quality and motility in men, enhances energy production in cells, including those in the reproductive system, protects the reproductive system against oxidative stress, and plays a role in the metabolism of fats, which can impact hormone balance. Regardless of their diet, women with PCOS are often deficient in L-carnitine. L-carnitine helps reduce blood glucose and increases insulin sensitivity, which is beneficial for PCOS patients who are typically insulin resistant.

**L-Glutamine** fights sugar cravings, regulates appetite, supports the gut microbiome, improves inflammation, strengthens gut health, and supports immune health.

Shilajit contains minerals and nutrients that support healthy hormone levels, may enhance sperm quality and motility, contains antioxidants that protect reproductive cells against damage, and may help reduce stress, which can impact fertility.

**Zinc** is essential for the production of healthy sperm and eggs, helps regulate hormone levels, including testosterone, supports healthy immune function, which is important for overall reproductive health, and helps protect reproductive cells against oxidative stress.

**Lycopene:** As an antioxidant that protects reproductive cells against damage, it improves sperm quality and motility in men, may help reduce the risk of miscarriage in women, and may improve overall reproductive health in both men and women.

**Selenium** is essential for healthy sperm development, plays a role in protecting against oxidative stress, and may help regulate thyroid function, which is important for reproductive health.

**Vitamin B12** is essential for healthy DNA synthesis, plays a role in the maturation of eggs, supports healthy sperm development, and may help regulate hormone levels.

**Alpha-lipoic acid (ALA):** This antioxidant helps protect reproductive cells against oxidative stress, supports healthy egg development, and may improve sperm quality and motility.

**Iron:** This mineral is essential for the production of healthy red blood cells, which are necessary for the transport of oxygen to reproductive tissues and for foetal development during pregnancy.

**Vitamin A** is essential for healthy foetal development, supports healthy ovarian function, and helps regulate the production of cervical mucus, which is important for fertility.

**Vitamin E:** As an antioxidant that protects reproductive cells against oxidative stress, it supports healthy egg and sperm development and may help improve the uterine lining for implantation during pregnancy.

**NAC (N-Acetyl Cysteine):** This powerful antioxidant protects reproductive cells against oxidative stress, supports healthy cervical mucus production, may improve ovulation and fertility in women with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), and may improve sperm quality and motility in men.

## **Herbs and supplements NOT SAFE during pregnancy**

**Black cohosh:** It decreases progesterone levels and promotes menstruation. Do not take this if you know your progesterone levels are too low. If your luteal phase is less than seven days, do not take black cohosh. However, keep it in mind for later in life because it is a popular substitute for conventional menopause medicines for this exact reason. It contains formononetin, a flavonoid that resembles oestrogen. It's usually taken in capsule form. Important: Do not take black cohosh for longer than 6 months or when pregnant.

**Chasteberry (Vitex agnus castus)** appears to support the pituitary gland function more optimally, therefore helping to control when and how much hormone is released in your body. It is slow-acting, though. To fully experience the advantages of the herb, everyday use may be required for three months or longer.

**Women who are pregnant or nursing shouldn't use Chasteberry (Vitex agnus castus).** A healthcare professional who is familiar with the use of Vitex should be consulted before taking it if you have PCOS, endometriosis, uterine fibroids, cancer of the breast, ovaries, or

prostate, or any other condition that is sensitive to hormones. Parkinson's disease, schizophrenia, and other conditions that affect dopamine levels should avoid Vitex (unless under the guidance of a licenced healthcare expert), as it may disrupt levels of the neurotransmitter. Additionally, there is some worry that Vitex may lessen the efficiency of hormone replacement treatment or oral contraceptives.

- Vitamin A supplements in high doses (more than 10,000 IU per day)
- Vitamin E supplements in high doses (more than 400 IU per day)
- Dong quai
- Ephedra
- Ginkgo biloba
- Goldenseal
- Kava
- St. John's wort
- Saw palmetto
- Yohimbe

This is not a comprehensive list, and there may be other supplements that should be avoided during pregnancy. It's always best to consult with a healthcare provider before taking any supplements during pregnancy to ensure their safety and effectiveness. Please remember that supplements and herbs cannot replace a healthy, balanced diet. It's of utter importance to obtain essential nutrients from food sources whenever possible.

# General Supplement Regimen To Improve Fertility For Women With PCOS



Obviously, it's important to talk to a healthcare provider to determine the right dosage and combination of supplements for each individual. That being said, here are some supplements that may be beneficial for women with PCOS to improve fertility:

1. Myo-Inositol: Doses range from 2-4 grams per day, typically split into two doses.
2. N-Acetyl Cysteine (NAC): Doses of 1.2-2.4 grams per day have been used in studies.
3. Vitamin D: Recommended daily intake for vitamin D is 600-800 IU per day, but some studies have used higher doses ranging from 2,000-4,000 IU per day for women with PCOS.
4. Omega-3 fatty acids: A typical dosage for omega-3 supplements is 1-2 grams per day of combined EPA and DHA.
5. Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10): A dose of 600 mg per day has been used in some studies for women with PCOS.
6. L-Carnitine: The standard dosage is 500-2,000 mg. Women included in a [study](#) on the effects of L-carnitine on PCOS received 3 g daily (Pursinapharma, Iran) for three months.
7. L-arginine: This amino acid can improve blood flow to the reproductive organs, which may improve fertility in women with PCOS. A dose of 1.6 grams per day has been used in some studies for women with PCOS.
8. L-Glutamine: There is no official guideline in place. 5g seems to be a safe intake according to this [study](#).

9. Magnesium: The recommended daily intake of magnesium for adults is 400-420 mg per day for men and 310-320 mg per day for women. However, some studies have used higher doses of magnesium (up to 1,000 mg per day) for its potential fertility benefits.

It's important to work with a healthcare provider to determine the appropriate dosage and timing of any supplement, as it can interact with other medications and supplements and may not be appropriate for everyone. Please consult with a healthcare provider before starting any new supplements, especially if you have a medical condition and take medication.

# General Supplement Regimen To Improve Fertility In Women With Hypothyroidism



**L**et me repeat myself: it's important to talk to a healthcare provider to determine the right dosage and combination of supplements for each individual. Especially when it comes to iodine supplementation, I recommend working with some sort of medical professional.

1. Selenium: 200 mcg daily.
2. Zinc: 15-30 mg daily. Take zinc after a meal or with food please.
3. Copper: When supplementing with zinc, it's important to ensure that you are also getting enough copper to maintain a healthy balance between the two minerals. Zinc can interfere with copper absorption, and excessive zinc intake can lead to copper deficiency. If supplementing with zinc, it's generally recommended to also include a small amount of copper. A common ratio is 15 mg of zinc to 1 mg of copper. However, it's important to be cautious with copper supplementation, as excessive intake can also be harmful. It's generally recommended to not exceed 2 mg of copper per day without medical supervision.
4. Iron: 18 mg daily.
5. Vitamin D: 1,000-2,000 IU daily.
6. Inositol: Inositol can help improve insulin sensitivity and regulate menstrual cycles in women with PCOS, which is a common cause of infertility in women with hypothyroidism. A daily dose of 2-4 grams has been suggested.
7. Omega-3 fatty acids: A daily dose of 1-2 grams of combined EPA and DHA.

8. Iodine: Low levels of iodine can negatively impact thyroid function and fertility. The recommended daily intake of iodine is 150 mcg for adults. However, your healthcare provider might recommend increasing the intake.
9. Vitamin B12, B6, B2: Vitamin B12: The recommended daily intake of vitamin B12 is 2.4 mcg for adults, vitamin B6 is 1.3-1.7 mg, and vitamin B2 is 1-2 mg, but higher doses may be necessary for people with deficiencies. Consider taking a vitamin B-complex supplement.

# General Supplement Regimen To Improve Fertility In Women With Endometriosis



**E**ndometriosis is a condition in which tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside of the uterus, causing pain and other symptoms. The following supplements may not cure you, but they can help alleviate symptoms and improve overall health:

1. Omega-3 fatty acids: Aim for at least 1,000 mg of EPA and DHA combined daily.
2. Curcumin: Aim for 500-1,000 mg daily.
3. Magnesium: Aim for 400-500 mg daily.
4. Vitamin D3: Aim for 1,000-2,000 IU daily.
5. Resveratrol: Resveratrol is a compound found in grapes, berries, and red wine, that has been shown to have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. This is your excuse to drink red wine! It may help reduce inflammation associated with endometriosis. Aim for 500-1,000 mg daily.
6. N-acetyl cysteine (NAC): Aim for 1,200-2,400 mg daily.
7. Ashwagandha: 300-500 mg daily.

# General Support For Hormonal Imbalance



1. Evening primrose oil: Aim for 1500-3000mg per day
2. Cinnamon: 1-6 grams per day
3. Red clover: 40-160mg per day of isoflavones
4. Vitex: 400-500mg per day of a standardised extract (0.5% agnuside) DO NOT take Vitex when pregnant or nursing. Women with hormone-sensitive conditions (such as endometriosis, uterine fibroids, PCOS, and cancers of the breast, ovaries) shouldn't take vitex without consulting a healthcare provider who is knowledgeable in its use.
5. Ashwagandha: 500-1000mg per day
6. Dong quai: 500-2000mg per day
7. Red raspberry leaf: 1.5-2.4g per day of dried herb

**A**gain, it's important to note that while these herbs may be beneficial for some women, they may not be suitable for everyone and should be used under the guidance of a healthcare provider or qualified herbalist. Additionally, it's important to address any underlying health conditions that may be contributing to hormone imbalances, such as thyroid dysfunction or PCOS.

# General Support For Irregular Cycles Or Anovulation



1. Ashwagandha: 500-1500mg daily, taken with food.
2. Black cohosh: 20-80mg per day.

Note: Do not use in pregnancy. DO NOT take Black Cohosh when pregnant or nursing.

3. False unicorn: 500-2000mg per day.
4. Vitex: 400-500mg per day. It's recommended to take vitex for at least three menstrual cycles to see an effect. DO NOT take Vitex when pregnant or nursing. Women with hormone-sensitive conditions (such as endometriosis, uterine fibroids, PCOS, and cancers of the breast, ovaries) shouldn't take vitex without consulting a healthcare provider who is knowledgeable in its use.
5. Cinnamon: 1-6g per day, taken with meals. Note: High doses of cinnamon can be toxic, so stick to recommended dosages.
6. Yarrow: 1-4g per day, steeped in hot water and consumed as a tea.
7. Red raspberry leaf: 1-2 teaspoons of dried herb steeped in hot water and consumed as a tea, up to three times per day. Alternatively, it can be taken in capsule form, 100-150mg per day.

# General Support For Heavy Periods



- Rhodiola: 300 mg daily.
- Vitamin C : 2,000-4,000 mg daily.
- Shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*):  $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon at a time three or four times a day.
- Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*): 4.5 g daily.
- Dong Quai (*Angelica sinensis*): is best taken as a liquid extract (tincture). The recommended daily dose of Dong Quai is 30 drops, twice a day, with a little water.
- Nettle: 4 g whole herb steeped 10 minutes hot water, three to four times daily.

# Support To Improve The Chances of Implantation (Uterine Tonics)



- Nettle: 1-2 teaspoons of dried nettle leaf in a tea, up to three times a day.
- Vitex: 400 mg once in the morning.

DO NOT take Vitex when pregnant or nursing. Women with hormone-sensitive conditions (such as endometriosis, uterine fibroids, PCOS, and cancers of the breast, ovaries) shouldn't take vitex without consulting a healthcare provider who is knowledgeable in its use.

- Red Clover: 1-3 teaspoons of dried red clover flowers in a tea, up to three times a day
- Dong quai: 2-4 grams of dried root per day or as a tincture (30-60 drops, 2-3 times per day).
- Red raspberry leaf: 1-3 teaspoons of dried red raspberry leaf in a tea, up to three times a day.
- Evening primrose oil: 1-3 grams of evening primrose oil per day, taken in divided doses.
- Maca: 1-3 grams per day.
- Tribulus: 500-1000mg per day.
- Ashwagandha: 300-500mg per day.
- Asparagus: A typical dose of asparagus extract is 250-500mg per day. Alternatively, you can simply add asparagus to your diet and eat it regularly as a food.

# Fertility Herbs For Shrinking Ovarian Cysts



- False unicorn: 1-2 tsp of dried root steeped in hot water for 10-15 minutes, taken 2-3 times daily.
- Tribulus: 250-750 mg taken 1-3 times daily with meals.
- Milk thistle: 140 mg standardized extract taken 1-3 times daily.
- Yarrow: 1-2 tsp of dried herb steeped in hot water for 10-15 minutes, taken 2-3 times daily.

# Improving Egg Quality



- Maca: 1500-3000mg per day
- Milk thistle: 150-300mg per day
- Ashwagandha: 500-1000mg per day
- Ginger: 1000-2000mg per day
- Dong quai: 500-1000mg per day

Again, in case you forgot, these dosages are general recommendations and may need to be adjusted based on individual needs and circumstances.

# Scant Cervical Mucus



- Evening primrose oil: 1500-3000 mg daily, taken orally from the first day of menstruation until ovulation.
- Red clover: 400-500 mg daily, taken from the first day of menstruation until ovulation.

# Low Progesterone



1. Vitamin B6: The recommended daily intake of vitamin B6 for adult women is 1.3-1.5 mg. 100 mg per day is the considered maximum safe dose for adults.
2. Zinc: The recommended daily intake of zinc for adult women is 8-11 mg. However, higher doses of up to 30-40 mg per day may be appropriate for individuals with a deficiency. When supplementing zinc for longer always consider also supplementing copper in a zinc to copper ratio of 15:1.
3. Magnesium: The recommended daily intake of magnesium for adult women is 310-320 mg. However, higher doses of up to 600-800 mg per day may be recommended for individuals with a deficiency.
4. Vitamin C: A dose of up to 1,000-2,000 mg per day may be recommended for individuals with a deficiency.
5. Vitamin E: 400-800 IU per day.
6. Vitex: 400-500 mg per day. It's recommended to take vitex for at least three menstrual cycles to see an effect.

**D**O NOT take Vitex when pregnant or nursing. Women with hormone-sensitive conditions (such as endometriosis, uterine fibroids, PCOS, and cancers of the breast, ovaries) shouldn't take vitex without consulting a healthcare provider who is knowledgeable in its use.

Dosages may vary based on age, sex, and health status. Additionally, higher doses of these nutrients should only be taken under the supervision of a healthcare provider.

# Estrogen Dominance



1. DIM (diindolylmethane): 100-300mg per day
2. Calcium d-glucarate: 500-1000mg per day
3. Magnesium: 200-400mg per day
4. Vitex: 40 mg per day
5. Black cohosh: 80mg per day

**D**O NOT Take Black Cohosh or Vitex when pregnant or nursing. Women with hormone-sensitive conditions (such as endometriosis, uterine fibroids, PCOS, and cancers of the breast, ovaries) shouldn't take vitex without consulting a healthcare provider who is knowledgeable in its use.

# Castor Oil Packs For Fertility



Castor oil packs have been used for many years as a natural remedy to support fertility and reproductive health. When used regularly, castor oil packs have been known to provide a range of potential benefits, including supporting digestive health, reducing inflammation, improving liver function, and even supporting fertility. Please use high-quality, cold-pressed castor oil and no cheap stuff that may be filled with nasties and won't bring the desired relief.

Here are some potential benefits of castor oil packs:

1. Increases blood flow to the reproductive organs: Castor oil packs may help increase blood flow to the reproductive organs, which can nourish the tissues and improve their overall function.
2. Supports detoxification: Castor oil packs may help support the body's natural detoxification processes by stimulating the lymphatic system and aiding in the elimination of toxins.
3. Reduces inflammation: Castor oil has anti-inflammatory properties and may help reduce inflammation in the reproductive organs, which can alleviate pain and other symptoms associated with fertility issues.
4. Relieves menstrual cramps: The use of castor oil packs during menstruation may help relieve menstrual cramps and reduce discomfort.
5. Supports hormonal balance: Castor oil packs may help support hormonal balance by improving the function of the endocrine system and supporting the liver's ability to metabolise hormones.

To use a castor oil pack, you will need the following:

- High-quality cold-pressed castor oil
- A piece of flannel or cotton cloth
- Plastic wrap
- A heating pad or hot water bottle

Here are the steps to using a castor oil pack:

1. Begin by applying a small amount of castor oil to the skin on your lower abdomen. Use gentle, circular motions to massage the oil into your skin.
2. Place the flannel or cotton cloth over your lower abdomen, covering the area where you applied the castor oil.
3. Cover the cloth with a layer of plastic wrap to keep the pack in place.
4. Apply heat to the area with a heating pad or hot water bottle. The heat will help the castor oil penetrate the skin and improve blood flow to the area.
5. Relax and lie down with the pack in place for at least 30 minutes. You may choose to leave it on for longer, up to several hours.
6. When you are finished, remove the pack and wash the area with warm water and soap.

It is recommended to use a castor oil pack 3-4 times per week for best results.

# Last But Not Least...

## Losing Weight The Mathematical Way



If you've made it this far, congratulations.

It would be a big surprise if you hadn't lost any weight by now.

In case, after your pregnancy, you've got the goal of being a skinny bitch, here you go. I've promised to give you the exact mathematical formula for how to lose weight. It is not rocket science; it is simple. I said it was simple; I didn't say it was easy, though.

In order to lose weight, you need to take in fewer calories than you burn, which forces your body to start using the stored fat you have for energy.

The big question is, How low should you go? How often should you lower your calorie intake?

Theoretically, any number of calories lower than your TDEE will lead to weight loss. If you cannot remember what TDEE stands for, please go back to chapter "CALORIES".

Logically, the wider your calorie deficit, the faster you'll lose weight.

However, I recommend reducing your calories by no more than 15% of your TDEE and doing this no more than 3 weeks in a row, starting on day 3 of your menstrual cycle.

Reason one: if you have a relatively low BMR and TDEE, reducing by 500 calories could mean your calorie goal will be lower than your BMR, and this most likely leads to a troubled hormonal balance. **BIG RED FLAG.**

Reason two: Your body burns more calories at the end of your cycle and needs support for healthy progesterone production. So if you diet at the end of your cycle, you make life very

hard for yourself, which may lead to hormonal imbalance and binges that lead to more hormonal imbalance and more binges, and so on.

Eating too few calories in the long term may put your body into a nutrient-deficient mode. When your body doesn't get the nutrients it needs to function normally, it will try to conserve energy by reducing the number of calories it burns, and most likely it will also decide it doesn't have enough to sustain a functioning reproductive system.

Reducing your TDEE by 15% is also psychologically more sustainable in the long run because you won't feel deprived, which means you're less likely to feel the urge to binge.

What's the easiest way to eat fewer calories consistently?

You guessed it, by prioritising real food and eating lots of protein. We've covered this already, and by now this should be second nature.

But let me refresh your memory: Real food is food that grew in the ground, on a tree, ran on the land, swam in the sea, or flew through the air. Meat, fish, eggs, vegetables, fruits, seeds, and nuts are all great examples of real food. Chicken nuggets might have come from a chicken somewhere along the production line but are not considered real food.

Real food is more likely to make and keep you full while also keeping you under your daily calorie intake goal. Think of it this way:

- If you accidentally overeat broccoli, it's going to be an additional 30 to 40 calories.
- If you accidentally overeat candy, soda, or chips, you might have eaten an extra 500–1000 calories and still be hungry.

It's not that I'm telling you to never eat junk food again; I'm suggesting that you think long and hard about the choices you make.

You can still have your chocolate bar. Either plan for the chocolate bar by intentionally eating fewer calories earlier or just eating less later in the day. One of my favourite strategies is to eat a small dessert before the main meal. This first allows you to eat the one thing you really want to eat but also to reset your taste buds. If I eat the dessert after a meal, my brain and taste buds ask for more. If you eat it upfront and eat your veggies and meat afterwards, you are more inclined to be satisfied with what you had. You are also less likely to overeat because you don't have to leave room or "make room" for the thing you want because you already have it.

You can also plan a big dessert or whatever you really want for the day instead of a meal. Is this nourishing? Of course not. But your body can forgive you some of the time. So if you have a bag of chips for dinner once a month, your body will forgive you. That bag of chips will

have the same amount of calories as a full dinner. No, it's not nutritious, but at least you haven't stuffed yourself full up to the brim because you squeezed in the bag of chips after a full dinner, where there is no room for a bag of chips.

Be deliberate about your choices. And if you eat non-nutritious food, do it deliberately, enjoy it, and move on. And moving on is what you can do because you will have the most amazing tasting, womb-loving breakfast the next morning, and your body won't care as much about Doritos for dinner.

Calculate your TDEE by clicking [HERE](#), alternatively use Cronometer, deduct 15%, and use this number as the amount of calories you eat every day from day 3 of your menstrual cycle to day 21.

Then please weigh yourself, calculate your new TDEE, and use this amount as the calories you eat from day 22 of your cycle to day 2 of your next cycle.

Example for someone with a TDEE of 2,000 calories and a 28-day cycle:

Cycle Day 1: 2,000 calories

Cycle Day 2: 2,000 calories

Cycle Day 3 - day 21: 1,700 calories

Cycle Day 22 - day 28: Weigh yourself, calculate your new TDEE. If the new TDEE is 1,900 calories, eat 1,900 calories to day 3 of your next menstrual cycle.

Cycle Day 1 - 2: 1,900 calories

Cycle Day 3-21: 1,615 calories (15% off 1,900 = 1,615)

Cycle Day 22 - day 28: Weigh yourself, calculate your new TDEE. If the new TDEE is 1,800 calories, eat 1,800 calories to day 3 of your next menstrual cycle.

Cycle Day 1 - 2: 1,800 calories

Cycle Day 3-21: 1,530 calories (15% off 1,800 = 1,530)

And so on...

If you do have a longer cycle than 28 days, simply give yourself a longer rest.

You already know how to track your food. Weigh every single thing you put into your mouth, including all food and drink (excluding your partner's bits and pieces;-). As more precise you are, the more precise the results will be. If you eat 10 nuts, weigh 10 nuts. If you drink coffee with milk, weigh the milk. If you drink 100 mL of soda, weigh it and track it. Yes, even your little piece of chocolate.

And remember, I don't think you want to look like Kate Moss (if you're too young to know who this is, google her); you want to be healthy and fertile. In the long run, please focus on nourishment and not on the damn calories.

# The End



**A**s I come to the end of this book, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the incredible journey that you have embarked upon. It takes great strength and courage to take your fertility into your own hands.

Throughout these pages, I have shared with you the importance of nourishing your body and womb with plenty of rest, real food, and incorporating movement while catching some sun rays. I have talked about the benefits of self-care and stress reduction and how they can make a world of difference in your fertility journey. But most importantly, I hope that I have inspired you to believe in yourself and the incredible potential that you possess.

Your body is designed to get pregnant.

Your body has the capability to heal your fertility.

Weight is just a number, and it should never define your worth or your ability to bring a child into this world. You are so much more than that. You are strong, resilient, and capable of achieving anything that you set your mind to.

As you move forwards on this fertility journey, remember to be kind to yourself. Celebrate your progress, no matter how small.

Better skin - success.

Shorter cycle - success.

More energy - success.

Ovulation - wootwoot!!!

I am rooting for you, and I believe in you. You've got this. I'm sending baby dust to all of you.

Love, Carmen



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