Empowering Your Fertility Journey After Cancer Transcript

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Introduction and guest background

Traumas are very inflammatory in itself. It does put an individual in that sympathetic state where you are not likely to be able to detoxify as well, to regenerate tissue as well, your heightened level of cortisol, and you're not able then to regulate your blood sugar.

So there's a lot of dysfunctions that take place within when you're holding on to trauma. Especially trauma that you're not able to express, that you're holding in.

This is Dr. Talks. Welcome back to the Super Fertility Summit. I'm so happy to have you here with me for this interview with Dr. Michael Karlfeldt, and you are in for a treat because we're going to be talking about something that isn't talked about anywhere else.

Dr. Michael is a board certified naturopath. Dr. Michael, you've devoted your career to practicing and promoting natural health, and you provide personalized naturopathic health care at your busy, multidisciplinary, integrative medical center, the Carl Felt Center in Boise, Idaho.

And you treat the root causes of disease and strengthen the body's ability to heal, which we know is so important in the realm of fertility. And you've been practicing medicine for over 30 years, and you're one of the leading experts in treating cancer.

which is very exciting for our purposes because we don't talk enough about the role of cancers or certain types of cancers in fertility and also vice versa, how fertility challenges can be related to cancer.

So those are some of the things that we're going to be talking about. today and you were the host of the show's Dr. Michael show and True Health Body, Mind and Spirit and the radio show Health Made Radio where you connected with international leaders in the integrative health arena and you're also the host of the internationally recognized podcasts Integrative Cancer Solutions with Dr.

Karlfeldt, where you feature cancer survivors and experts in the field showing how they beat cancer, as well as Integrative Lyme Solutions with Dr. Karlfeldt, where you feature people who have successfully conquered Lyme disease, another really important topic for fertility and pregnancy.

It's an honor to have you here today with us. Dr. Michael, welcome. Well, thank you. This is going to be so fun and I really look forward to our discussion.

I'm so glad you're doing this summit because it's such needed information. So thank you. Thank you so much. And I agree, I'm really excited for this conversation and for the mamas, dadas, parents of all genders to have the opportunity to learn from you.

You specialize in cancer and in Lyme disease. Both of those are incredibly important topics for fertility, pregnancy, and the intergenerational transmission of health.

And yet they are overlooked in most discussions. of fertility and quote unquote infertility. We don't use that term at the Fertility and Pregnancy Institute because we know there are very few people in the world who are truly infertile or truly sterile.

So I would love for you, Dr.

Hope, fertility, and preparing the body

Michael, to start with us today by thinking to the end of this interview, what's the one thing that you hope that those listening to our voices right now will be able to take away from them when we complete this conversation today?

Well, I think fertility is such an important aspect. And for parents to be able to have a child, it brings so much joy and so much hope into their lives.

So I think it's important for people to know that there's always hope and there's always a solution. And the body is amazing. It's the best doctor there is.

And if we support it appropriately, It can do wonders for us. Yeah, there's some tools out there that may not have been considered and to really, if you're kind of running into challenges, then to make sure that you really investigate to see what's available.

And also just the component of preparing yourself prior to the pregnancy. So, you know, we're going to be talking a little bit about people that have dealt with cancer in the past.

and gone through maybe treatments for that, what do they need to do in preparation for pregnancy? Because obviously, a child grows within the mother and also the sperm of the father, the quality of that impacts the child as well.

So we want to make sure that that soil is as strong and healthy as possible. I love that so much. You said the body is amazing. It's the best doctor out there.

And there's always hope and there are always solutions. So that's really the through line that I'm excited for us to carry with us today because I think that that's so meaningful and so important.

You also said something that I love saying all the time, which is, this Chinese proverb that the best time to plant a garden was 20 years ago and the next best time is right now today and making sure that that soil is as healthy and fertile as humanly possible.

particularly when somebody or their partner has had a history of cancer or Lyme disease or other health challenge, but for everybody who wants to provide the best soil for the growth of future generations.

And I know that all of us here, if we're taking the time to be here, it's because we're committed to that. And our world really needs that because our world is in a crisis when it comes to both childhood health and adulthood.

So thank you so much for this. I'm really excited. So I have so many things that I want to ask you, Dr. Michael, is that we have started to have more and more mamas coming to us after cancer treatment for help with their fertility.

And I don't in any way feel that I specialize in being able to help people following cancer treatment. But what I do know is that in primestering and in the Primester Protocol, we are the very best pathway to natural ovarian rejuvenation, which is incredibly relevant, or sperm rejuvenation, which is incredibly relevant if you have had cancer treatment.

So can you talk to us a little bit about how cancer treatment can affect future fertility in males, females across genders, and then what people should do if they have had cancer treatment and they know they want to be a parent in the future?

So there are different factors to consider. One is the cancer in itself. What type of cancer did you deal with? And also recognize that cancer doesn't just show up in a vacuum.

There's always a reason for it. And that same reason can then impact the child as it's developing, the fetus as it's developing. It doesn't mean that the cancer itself is going to impact the child.

Cancer treatment and future fertility

It's more the driver of it, such as if you are exposed to a lot of chemicals, a lot of heavy metals, there may be a lot of fungal or parasites or whatever it may be that initially could be a factor that drove that.

And then also looking at the emotional mental aspect, are there certain traumas that I'm holding or that took place in my life, stressors that also could have initiated the cancer.

So you have these driving factors and then you go through treatment to then become come to state of no evidence disease. It doesn't mean that these factors are then gone, you still have to deal with them.

And whether they are factors and to kind of impact your immune system, there will still be a factor in the development of the fetus. So there are several different specialized tests out there that people like myself can run them to identify and see what are these factors.

So that's one component that's really important to look at. The second component is what type of therapies did I receive? Did I receive platinum drugs?

Did I do radiation? Did I do surgery? What type of therapies did I receive and what impact did that have on my body? So if you're dealing then with. For instance, you know, certain platinum drugs or certain nutrients, they tend to deplete.

In addition to then you have the aspect of heavy metals that are then introduced in the system and you want to make sure you clear that out because that is something that will easily pass through the placenta and then will impact the baby and will also impact your endocrine system and how everything is communicated, your HPA axis, how the hypothalamus pituitary is communicating a thyroid and impacting then also your ovaries or your testes.

So you want to kind of assess that whole terrain as well. And then as a next step. We want to kind of support then the tissue integrity in itself so that, because if you have gone through therapy, it is going to then weaken your tissue in itself, you know, how muscles are built, bones are built, nerves are built.

And all that becomes really important, obviously, as the fetus is developing. You know, because here you're rapidly building than a child, you know, that's developing, you know, neural development, you have the bones, the muscles, the heart, and all these at the different stages that's taking place.

So you want to then take an account and kind of look for all of that. And so there's a lot to consider. And then you've always thought, I want to optimize, you know, one gland that gets hit quite a bit during any kind of therapy is the thyroid.

And you always want to make sure that the thyroid is optimized, that it has the nutrients that it need, and then also then remove the stressors. So, these are just some things to consider as you are then stepping into that phase of wanting to have a child.

And by clearing these factors out, you're also increasing the likelihood of your ability to be able to become pregnant. That's right. And also the programming of the health of your future child.

And you talked about the HPA axis, the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal cortical axis, the body stress response system, and the gonads are on that axis as well.

And so is the thyroid. And so this is all very interrelated. One thing I want to underscore is when you were talking about the drivers of cancer, the underlying drivers, So you said just because you have treatment and get to a position or place of no detectable disease doesn't mean that the underlying drivers have been addressed and still need to be addressed because those underlying drivers that resulted in cancer can also result in fertility challenges, pregnancy complications, perhaps greater risk of neurocognitive deficits or disorders and other types of health problems in the child, grandchildren, future generations.

And so one thing that you said was emotional traumas. And I think that that's a really revolutionary idea for a lot of

people that emotional experiences can be and stored traumas can be underlying drivers of cancer and other types of disease.

Can you talk a little bit about that for people who are hearing this idea for the first time and are really surprised by this idea?

Trauma, stress, and cancer drivers

Well, and this has been correlated many, many times where you see actually a traumatic event or stressful event, and then lo and behold, kind of right after, then, you know, an individual may develop in cancer, especially, you know, things like breast tumors.

You know, we know that breast obviously is a very nurturing glands and they see then that when there's a disconnect, you know, between parent and then the individual or the individual and their children.

that for the mother, so to say, that is getting the breast cancer, you see that disconnect can then drive the cancer from taking place. We know that traumas are very Inflammatory in itself, it does put an individual in that sympathetic state, you know, where you are not likely to be able to detoxify as well, to regenerate tissue as well, your heightened level of cortisol, and you're not able then to regulate your blood sugar, you're not.

So there's a lot of dysfunctions that takes place, you know, within when you're holding onto trauma, and especially trauma that you're not able to express, that you're holding in.

It doesn't necessarily have to take place right before the cancer diagnosis. It can be something that took place when you're a little young child and you've been holding that energy and as you've then been exposed to other factors like chemicals, heavy metals, then that kind of weak area of your body where you're holding the trauma is the one that is then more likely to exhibit than cancer type of behavior.

So it becomes really important to go through, you know, for any individual, and I think this is whether you have had cancer or not cancer, is to kind of go through your timeline and look at traumatic events and make sure that you have addressed them and expressed them and not looking at them as, well, they happened so long ago.

I'm not even thinking about it. Well, the body keeps the score, you know, the body holds on to the memory and so it is important that they get processed in some way.

This is very, very important. It makes me think of a message we received just in the last couple of weeks from one of our mamas who's 45 years old and she came to Primester in advance of attempting IVF and when she went to She primestered and she went to her IVF clinic that she wanted to use.

And because of her age, they were not optimistic that they were going to take her for IVF. But they said, let us look at your antral follicle count in your AMH level, anti-malarion hormone level, which are correlated with one another.

And if it's not too low, we'll take you and we'll put you through more extensive testing to see what needs to be done. And because she had primestered, her AMH and antral follicle count had increased so much.

She was in 95th or 99th percentile for follicles for her age and AMH level for her age. And so they took her for IVF and put her through more extensive testing.

And when they did that, they found that she had breast cancer. So she wrote us and she said, Dr. C, you and your work And the Primester saved my life because if my AMH and andropholical count hadn't been high enough, they would have turned me away.

I never would have gotten this testing. It wouldn't have been detected. And now they detected it so early and took care of it. And one thing that I think about is what are, so first of all, thank God for that, right?

So beautiful. And now what are the next steps when you've had treatment before conceiving naturally or going into IVF? And also this, and I know this is a big question with a lot of parts, vice versa, because we get a lot of mamas asking us, how do I detox from the IVF process?

Well, if you've already had an embryo transfer and you're pregnant, there's no detoxing. But if you are freezing embryos for later and you're not pregnant yet, then detoxing is okay.

So can you talk to us a little bit about the bi-directional relationship that I was just mentioning? And it is bi-directional and I think that's really important to emphasize.

Yeah. And you made a very important point is that while you're pregnant, you don't want to do a lot of detoxification. So you don't want to be pushing the liver to detoxify.

You don't want to be doing things that, you know, clear toxins out of the cells, you know, because the, the fetus is exposed to anything that you are moving into the bloodstream, you know, from storage.

So you want to be very, very aware of that. And that's why it's important in preparation to do these things. So. The liver obviously is a hugely important organ and it regulates a majority of your endocrine function.

As some people say, like for instance, the thyroid, that the liver regulates about 80% of thyroid function. So if you have issues there and frequently within fertility, thyroid plays a huge, huge role because it's, and it's funny for a lot of women, they have thyroid emotionally.

You're not being heard, your voice is not recognized and so you don't feel powerful in your voice and all of that impacts this throat area and your thyroid.

So I think that plays a huge role in kind of that power becoming a mother. The key is to as you're then receiving, you know, you kind of receive hormonal treatment and you're freezing your egg, you know, let's have that scenario.

That gives you the opportunity then to support the liver to clear out these unwanted. hormones, you know, because we have the, the way the body functions as, is that it likes to recycle hormones.

Detox support before pregnancy and IVF

And so if we build up to an excessive amount, then all of a sudden that creates a dysregulation and how the endocrine systems, cause you have the hypothalamus in your brain and continually checks and see how much hormones that are out there.

then it sends a signal to the pituitary, tells the pituitary what it should tell to the other glands and how much they should produce. So it's like a negative feedback that takes place.

So if we have a lot of kind of strong hormones in the system or toxic hormones or xenoestrogens from plastics and from heavy metals and things, it will then interfere with that negative feedback loop.

And it will then also then interfere with your ability to then when you're implanting the embryo to have the proper signaling for the uterus, for the development of the child.

So you want to kind of clean all of that up. And simple things that you can use, you know, you have all the sulforaphanes. type of, of foods, which includes all the, the cruciferous, you know, the broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, you know, those become really important.

And if you can get those in a, in a sprouted form like broccoli sprouts, you know, it's a very powerful. source of the sulforaphane and also calcium deglucrate is another one that helps to kind of clear things out and you want to do that in combination with some kind of a fiber like an apple pectin type of fiber and because what happens when you are clearing it out of the liver, it then enters into the intestinal tract and because the body is so wanting to spare the

hormones, because it takes a lot of effort for the body to produce it, so then it tends to get reabsorbed and goes up in the liver again.

So if you can use some kind of a fiber that helps to lock on to the hormones and kind of move that out, rather than it recycling that way you can start to clear out some of these unwanted hormones and that just kind of cleans up the communication between all that and within the whole endocrine system so that you can have proper signaling because I mean you here you get trillions you know 30 plus trillions of cells and they all need to interact and each cell has at least a million activities, actions within every second.

So there's a lot of orchestration that takes place throughout the whole body. And then now you're going to bring in an additional individual in you. So you kind of recognize this communication needs to be optimized.

So you want to clear out all the noise that's there so that it can function appropriately. I love that so much. This communication needs to be optimized so that you can clear out all the noise.

And I think what's really important about that is that this is relevant even if you feel like you're in perfect health and you eat clean and you do all the things.

It's worth taking the time to prepare or as we say, prime master for your healthiest fertility, your healthiest pregnancy. and your healthiest baby, your super baby, as we call them.

And I love that so much, clearing out all the noise. You know, one thing that keeps coming to my mind as I'm listening to you, Dr. Michael, is the role of relationship.

And we're the only place in the world that uses a psycho-bio-neuro-sociocultural approach to fertility. And that's a mouthful, but really looking at the interactions of these different levels of us and the world around us and the role of our social relationships and social environment, our social identities, aspects of our lineage, intergenerational stressors, etc.

And one thing that keeps coming to mind for me is you know, relationships are the soul and the beauty of life, and they are also the source of pain in life, right?

And it's such a fascinating thing to me, because if you think about most of the traumas that people have experienced in their lives have to do with other people, but also the very best and most important things in life are relationships with other people or in some cases with your higher power.

And I think a lot about this as you're talking about the role of cancer and fertility and vice versa. You even talked about the role of the thyroid in overall health and fertility, but also maybe thyroid cancers and susceptibility to thyroid cancers.

And we teach about the relationship of the voice to the reproductive organs and the birth canal and being in your power as you step into your fertile power and your identity of mother.

And this interesting thing that I've observed over now almost 28 years of doing this work, where when women are in partnerships, let's say they have a male partner, not every woman has a male partner, but let's say she has a male partner and she gets treated a little bit like a child in her partnership and feels a little bit or maybe very stripped of her voice.

We see that coming up a lot in the relationships that are coming through to seek help. And so it was really interesting to me when you talked about the voice, but can you talk a little bit about what you observe in your work in terms of relationships and cancer risk and also cancer healing?

Yeah, in relation, you're absolutely right. I mean, we are pack animals. I mean, we don't do well just being by ourselves and they see that loneliness, you know, they've done studies on just the emotion of being lonely, that it puts you more at risk for these degenerative diseases and cancer than smoking would or drinking alcohol would.

How we interact within our family. how we interact with our social groups becomes so important and that network becomes so important. And we're looking at the different blue zones, for instance, and why are they living so long and why are they doing so well?

And we try to figure out what are they eating? What are they doing? And we see that, well, these people, they eat this and these people over here eat something different over there.

Relationships, voice, and emotional health

But the common thread seems to be that it's a strong community and they all feel a place within that community and they are needed and they have the ability to.

where people are there supporting you when they need help. And that plays a role, I think, in anything. And cancer, obviously, is a huge, huge component in that.

In my book, Better Way to Treat Cancer, that I came out just last year, there's a huge section that talks about the emotional, the psycho-emotional, What is fascinating is, you know, just looking at the immune system, you've used the word psychoneural.

So you have the psychoneural immunology, you have psychoneural endocrinology. You can bring them all together, you know, because we see that in the immune system, the white blood cells.

They have specific receptor sites then for the neurochemicals, the different chemicals that are produced in the brain that relates to your emotions. So if you are sad, you're going to send sad signals to your immune system.

If you are happy, it's going to be happy. If you feel empowered, you're going to have an empowered immune system. So mention a husband treating the wife as a child.

Now the signals are going to become that I'm powerless. Then obviously that puts you more at risk for diseases because you're not able to defend yourself because you don't have that power.

Then the child, if that mother is pregnant, then those signals are going to be sent to the child. So the child is going to also feel that, you know, I feel, you know, I don't feel that powerful.

And so when that child then is born and lived through life, that becomes like a set point for that child. for the rest of their life that this is what feels normal to them and they get anxious if they don't fall back to that set point where they don't feel powerful.

So it's become so important, relationship is so important through this whole process, whether it's cancer or whether it's heart disease or wanting to become pregnant.

That's why it is so, I can't highlight this enough to really do an inventory of where am I in the world, you know, where's my relationship, forgiveness, gratitude, all these different things are so important to address prior to.

And we do every one of those and so much more in the Primester Protocol. And so it's just so powerful, so powerful to hear you speak about this from this lens of your work in cancer and other types of disease.

I would like to switch gears a little bit because this is another part of the link between cancer and fertility that is not talked about enough that I wanna make sure we cover.

So more and more, we understand the role of viruses in producing cancers. And one type of cancer that is created by a virus is cervical cancer, and it's the HPV virus that underlies that cancer or can lead to that cancer.

Now, most people's bodies can clear HPV And I always say to our mamas at the Fertility and Pregnancy Institute, HPV is the common cold of sexual activity.

Almost everybody who is having sexual intercourse is going to be exposed to HPV at some point in time. And usually, just like with the cold, the body can clear it, but sometimes that doesn't happen.

And when it results in cervical cancer, that can be catastrophic for fertility. Can you talk a little bit about viral cancers and cervical cancer specifically, which is increasingly common?

Yeah, and you're absolutely right. Infectious agents are looked at more and more as factors. Viruses, you have talked about HPV and cervical and you have glioblastomas inside of megalovirus, but then also you have different herpes type of viruses that can also drive things.

So it becomes really important to address those. Obviously, once you have a virus, it's going to be there. You know, it's not like you can kind of kill it off and it's all gone.

So now you need to look at what can I do to support my immune system? What can I do to support my tissue in itself? And so one, and we talked a lot about relationship and stressors, you know, that is one that really suppresses the immune system.

You need to kind of be at a place where you feel at peace, where you're not cortisol, your stress hormones are elevated all the time. You need to be able to sleep appropriately, so good sleep hygiene, because that is when the whole system reboots.

You also, the issue of electrosmog is a big issue because the The electrosmog impacts the pathogens inside of you and make them more virulent and also suppress the immune systems.

Can I consider, you know, what am I exposed to in my bedroom? What am I exposed on a daily basis and how can I control that in the best possible way? And there's a lot of information out there.

In regards to HPV specifically. AHCC, which is from a kind of a mushroom extract, is a really powerful tool and to have that on board anytime also you deal with any kind of mucosal membrane.

the cervix is, you know, you want to look at vitamin A, make sure that you have appropriate amount of that. And zinc becomes important, vitamin C and vitamin D becomes really important.

Viruses, HPV, and cervical cancer

So those are strong agents to really help you. Then you can also bring in things like acanacea, beta-glucans, goldenseal, antigraphis. And so there are a lot of powerful tools that you can bring that you can kind of hit things harder If you're then diagnosed with HPV and you're maybe dealing with cervical or you're concerned with cervical or you're post cervical cancer and you want to then have a baby.

So to bring these tools on board to really kind of check the activity of the HPV to make sure that it is not being active, it's just going to lay dormant and not express itself.

That's right. Thank you so much. This is incredibly helpful. And I think people understand that, but I also think it's important to underscore that once you come into contact with a virus, it's never gone completely.

It's just lying dormant, and that's what you want to achieve so that you're asymptomatic as much as possible, which is a sign that your immune system is managing the virus and the viral load.

So thank you so much for that. This has been such an incredible conversation. I feel like I want to have a whole separate conversation with you on Lyme disease because that's such a big issue with fertility and pregnancy.

But this has been so beautiful. Before we close for today, Dr. Michael, and to be continued, I would love to keep talking to you. I would love to hear you say if there were just one thing that somebody could do or would do to take care of their fertility and the health of their future super babies.

In your mind, what's that one thing? Well, yeah, it's hard to do one thing, but I mean, we talk so much about relationships and I feel that that is if there's one thing that trumps any kind of nutrition, it trumps any kind of detoxification strategies, it trumps pretty much everything.

So that is that one thing. If an individual is going to bring in one supplement, the supplement that I love the most pre, during and post is chlorella.

I love chlorella. You want to make sure you get a good quality. We carry a brand here that I know is really, really high quality because it will then, it's like a vacuum cleaner of heavy metals and chemicals and it's nutritive and it just does so many amazing things.

And that is safe to take pre, during, and post because if you do it while you're pregnant, it will then move heavy metals away from the fetus. If you do it while you're breastfeeding, it will then move heavy metals and chemicals away from the breast milk.

And so that is probably one of my favorite supplements anytime anyone is pregnant or thinking of pregnancy. We recommend it in the Primester protocol as well.

And we, Bio Pure is the brand. I don't know if that's the one that you love as well. And I also give it to my super babies in their smoothies. So it's just really, really important.

I absolutely agree. But I love that you said relationships that trumps anything about nutrition, detoxification, because it is in everything and it is constant and everywhere.

And so I just want to say as a woman who has spent her life walking beside women and their partners or women who don't yet have partners but really want to have their super babies that it's scary to choose to walk away from a relationship when you've reached an age where you feel like you're running out of time and it's too easy to run into a relationship that isn't gonna be in your highest good long term because you feel like you're running out of time.

But I can say from my vantage point that that is hellish to be stuck with somebody for the rest of your life who is not good for you and not good for your super babies and that you would be much better served taking a different pathway choosing to mother on your own.

I just want to say that because I don't think anyone says that directly either. And yet I've had a front row seat to the pain of many families who have been in those shoes.

And you really said it too, Dr. Michael. So thank you so much. Last question. What does super fertile mean to you? What does it feel like? What does it look like?

What does it evoke in you?

One key fertility takeaway and closing thoughts

So super hurdle is when a mother's in that place where they just, it's that joyous, expressive, where they love life and they feel that I'm just ready to bring another individual into this beautiful world that I'm in, that's filled with health and purpose and intention and gratitude.

And yeah, so it's just. feeling that you want to have somebody else to be able to grow up in that environment alongside with you. I love that so much when the mother is in that joyous expressiveness where she loves life so much that she's ready to bring another human into the beautiful world that she inhabits.

I love that so much and I think that is such a beautiful feeling for us to hold and our intention for each mama, each dada, each human of every gender listening who's ready for their super baby.

So on that, I just want to thank you for this beautiful, magnificent conversation where we got to talk about really

important things that aren't talked about.

in the world and that have critical scientific evidence behind them and also tremendous practical importance in everyday life. Thank you so much, Dr. Michael, for being here today.

Absolutely my pleasure, Dr. Cleopatra. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Same. And to you listening, I hope you did also. I hope you took away some really important things.

Thank you so much for being here with us at the Super Fertility Summit. I do not take your time for granted. It's the most important resource we have available to us.

So thank you for being here and come with me over to our next interview now. Thank you for tuning into Doctor Talks. We hope today's episode has enlightened and inspired you on your path to optimal health.

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