Fertility Apps: Choose Your Conception Ally Carefully Transcript

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Summit Introduction

Hey, we're are your co-hosts of the Beyond Infertility Summit. Dr. Carrie and Dr. Aumatma. And we have an incredible lineup of speakers for you. In addition, Dr.

Overview of Fertility Apps

Aumatma and I have created a mini crash course for, you know, every day you can expect a mini lecture from us covering foundational content, helping you gain context and insight before deep diving into the day's interviews.

We hope that this will serve as a helpful context to get deeper understanding through the day's interviews. Hey, welcome back to the Beyond "Infertility" Summit.

I'm your host, Dr. Aumatma. And today we're diving into fertility apps. Why is this important? Because I know the majority of you are using some sort of app that you think is helping support your fertility.

However, there are a lot of misconceptions in this space, so I'm just going to break it down and guide you through what the options are out there. Trust me, this is not going to cover every single app.

The idea here is to really cover the big categories.

Basic Cycle Tracking Apps

And then if you want to get into specifics, we will do that in a deeper dove masterclass. All right. So number one, all of the apps that are basically like self trackers, that's what I call them.

It's like ova, glow, flow, apple, like my cycle on apple. All of those are essentially just tracking your inputs. If you input that, you have started your cycle today and then on average it will say, oh, your average cycle is 28 days, so your ovulation is 14 days.

It's based on an estimate. They are usually not very accurate in terms of predicting your ovulation window. They're great for understanding and keeping an eye on your cycles and your hormones.

But really, if you are trying to conceive, these are really not adequate predictors. If you are combining this information with some of your own information around oh, usually when I ovulate I feel this way and it's pretty consistent cycle after cycle, then you're good.

But if you've been trying to conceive for a little while and it's not working, you may need a more high tech solution, or I should say a higher tech solution.

So next one I'm going to go to is something like pre mom. We can put natural cycles in this category as well.

Basal Body Temperature Trackers

Pre mom is an under the tongue thermometer. It transfers that data to an app that then predicts your ovulation window. It's based on basal body temperature tracking, which I'm a huge fan of, and I have a whole like PDF that you can download that talks about all of the benefits that come out of basal body temperature tracking.

However, the downside of something that's a manual thing like pre mom is going to be that you have to remember to put that thermometer in your mouth within 30 to 60 seconds of waking up, which most people forget.

Most people like go on their phones and realize 30 minutes later, oops, I missed my window. So you literally have to do it. The instant you wake up. That's when it's the most accurate.

It's actually like less accurate than some of the devices that you wear, the wearable devices that are going to give you more accurate data because they're actually catching your temperature just before you wake up.

But close enough if good enough. It's a low cost investment. So it's a relatively good solution if you're just starting out, if you're like, hey, I'm not sure I want to spend $200 on something, no problem.

This is like a good starting point. Then we have I mentioned Oura and natural cycles. And natural cycles does have a temperature version, meaning like you get a manual thermometer and it will upload the data.

But if you have an Oura Ring, it connects to your Oura Ring. And I'm not wearing my ring today. It connects to your Oura Ring. And theoretically, the Oura Ring is collecting temperature data all the time.

It's also collecting heart rate, a couple of other variables like recovery and things like that. The Oura Ring in and of itself is great. I'm not sure that the basal body temperatures are very accurate.

Wearables and Oura Ring Data

We've done some internal just like, is this accurate? Can we rely on this? So we have people who wear the Oura Ring And what I'm going to go to next, as far as like wearable basal body temperature trackers and the Oura Ring temperatures were different.

But if it was just the temperatures, meaning that the temperatures are usually lower, they're lower by like about a degree. And if they were consistently lower and still showed ovulation at the same time as the temperature trackers, like the BBT trackers, then I would say, Oh, it's okay, but they don't.

So they were a little bit further off in terms of predictions, and I think that they're still using a fair bit of just info that people input on top of the temperature data.

So yeah, I'm not totally convinced the technology is there yet. Also, basal body temperature tracking is scientifically. There are no studies that have proven that you can get good data from extremities, basal body temperature in and of itself needs to be at the core of your body.

So it needs to be like armpits, mouth behind your neck, somewhere close to the heart, because that's where you're going to get the most accurate temperatures and that's where you're going to see those like minor fluctuations that really support for not only ovulation prediction, but a whole bunch of other things.

And again, that's in our PDF where you're going to be able to access that PDF so you'll get all of the information that we can get and gather from temperature devices.

And my favorite of those is temp draw.

LH Strips and Multi-Hormone Testing

They are aware of all that you put on your arm is like really comfortable. You can wear it to bed. It's easy, easy, easy. So I love that one. In terms of other options, as far as ovulation prediction goes, we have three other main categories of technologies.

We have something called LH strips, which you guys are probably familiar with. They're really popular in the fertility world. The advantage is that they're super inexpensive.

That disadvantage is that they unfortunately are just LH, which is one hormone, and that hormone only. It spikes, but it doesn't always mean that ovulation has happened.

So if you rely solely on LH strips, you're missing out on really all of those odd cycles where you didn't actually ovulate, or women like people with PCOS who really have fluctuating levels of LH multiple times in a cycle and it's not really indicative of ovulation happening.

So LH strips are really not my favorite. They're a good device if you only if you want just some basic information. But I am a bigger fan of some of the strips than some of the strips that measure more than just.

LH So there are strips like Mira you've Ineedto prove they're all kind of in the same game and they're tracking FSC estrogen and progesterone. So all four of the hormones that are needed and important for fertility are being tracked in one of these apps.

The advantage, at least for, I would say, people that have been trying to conceive for over one year, even over two years, you're really looking at is there a hormonal dysregulation under the surface of what's happening with people's fertility?

And more often than not, there is right. So most of the people that we work with are having some sort of hormonal dysregulation that we're trying to address.

We want to harmonize the body. We want to optimize fertility. And then we actually give our clients these devices so that we can monitor improvement.

Mira and Real-Time Fertility Monitoring

We can know that their hormones are more in balance and they don't have to keep going back for blood tests. So it's certainly cheaper than doing a blood tests every month.

And the advantage of something like that versus a blood test is a blood test is still one day in time. So most LH, estradiol and FSA each is going to be tested on cycle day three.

We talked about it yesterday, super important to know, but we don't have to keep repeat testing. If we know what the baseline was, then we are okay to track improvement of hormones through something like Mira Mira is actually one of our partners, so we love it.

That's the device that we're using in our practice and interfaces really well with our back end. So we get a lot of data and we're able to look at that data in real time and say, Hey, you're about to ovulate in two days.

Or Actually ovulation didn't happen this month. Or There are times when we've been like, Hey, you're FLC just so high, please hold off trying this month because that FSH is going to lower the quality of egg that's released and we don't take chances on that.

So we can really regulate and really support the conception journey with optimizing in real time rather than waiting in retrospective data to say Hey you ovulated on cycle day 15 ovulation day is helpful, it's important, but at the end of the day, like that's not enough information for us to understand.

Is this person's hormones staying at the optimal level as they're going through their train journey? Right. So we don't want to leave people hanging or we don't want to have people just kind of not know that their hormones have shifted, their hormones are out of whack, or the stress that they experience at work is now showing up as a hormone dysregulation, which happens really frequently.

So really like hyper honing in on that makes the conception journey faster and essentially you can bring your baby home sooner, right? So those are the devices that we use.

And the last one I will mention is Kegg, which is essentially an egg shaped thing that you insert vaginally and it has you doing key goals while it's monitoring cervical fluid changes in your cervix.

Kegg and Choosing the Right Tracker

The cervical fluid is a really great indicator for where you are in your fertility. It's really great to predict ovulation. However, it's not great as far as understanding what's happening with the hormones.

So again, depending on what kind of data you want, you really want to choose a device that's going to support your goals. And if you're working with a provider, then having that goal match what the provider needs as far as data to support you on this journey is really, really crucial.

So in usually, I'll say like from our experience, we've tested a bunch of things. This is the summary and our to go tos are a basal body temperature checker because we get so much information from that.

And then the second one is going to be Mira and we usually like add those two pieces of information together. Yes, it's a little bit redundant, but we're getting the basal body temperature.

We're able to see shifts and we're able to see some of the underlying things honestly, like thyroid and gut health and things like that. And we layer on top of it being able to have tangible hormone results that say, Oh, there's an improvement, there's a spike, there's an imbalance, and we can figure out what to do about it.

So those are all the things that you need to know about fertility trackers. Again, make sure to download my PDF on this so that you can have it in written form.

And we have a couple of discount codes with our partners Tempdrop and Mira. So definitely feel free to access those if if it sounds like something you want to use.

All right, take care. I'll see you tomorrow.