Introduction and Hope for Fertility

Welcome back to The Super Fertility Summit. I am so excited for the discussion that we are about to have with Dr. Kela Smith. She is a Leading Holistic, Integrative Fertility and Hormone Doctor.

She's the author of five books, and her sixth book is forthcoming. And she is dedicated to supporting women and couples who are facing fertility challenges.

And she herself has overcome her own fertility struggles using the Hormone P. U. Z. Z. L. E Method. It's been her mission to help others solve their infertility puzzles, so that they can get and stay pregnant and have a healthy pregnancy and have a healthy, happy postpartum.

We are so excited to have you here, Dr. Kela, and I can't wait for you to teach us all about the role of functional lab testing and so many other things that you specialize in.

Welcome. Thank you so much. I'm super excited to be here, Dr. Cleopatra. It's wonderful to have you. Dr. Kela, let's start from the beginning. I would love for you to tell us if there was one thing that you would want for everyone listening to our voices right now to be able to take away in a very practical manner from the discussion that we're having, what would that one thing be?

I would love to tell your audience that you have so much power to change your fertility and get pregnant, and I want you to be your own advocate, and I want you to know that every day that you get up, you have so much control over this, and I want you to take back that power, and I want to give you hope.

Functional Lab Testing Explained

Do not give up until you get through your path to parenthood and you have that baby in tow. You can do this. And I believe in you. I love that so much.

Dr. Kela, this is really important. And one of the things that I always say is that if you don't give up, your success is almost inevitable. But if you do give up, then all the things that people, whether it was doctors or your partner or family members or even your own negative self-talk and hard moments, all the things that people said would not be possible for you become true.

And so thank you so much for starting us off with that message of remembering not to give up until we have the thing that our heart really wants, and in this case, that means getting to have our super babies in our arms.

Thank you so much for that. I would love for you to talk to us about functional lab testing. And what are the functional labs that you see? The majority of people needing when they're trying to solve their infertility or fertility puzzle?

Sure. So first I just want to talk briefly. The difference between regular lab testing that you get at your your Western medical doctor versus what a functional lab test is and what it does.

And the difference in those two is, one, they're looking for very different parameters. The testing that you get at your Western doctor, they're just looking for a baseline to see do you have disease or illness.

And if you do how can we treat that with surgery, with an art treatment, with a, you know, a pharmaceutical. They're looking for those parameters. And it's a very low baseline.

I always say they're looking for, you know, normal if you will. They're not looking for optimal. So what a functional

lab is it's going to look for the root cause of what's causing this issue in the first place.

And it's looking for how can we optimize your body with these parameters so that it does what it was made to do naturally. And that's get and stay pregnant.

So that's the first thing. And then the second thing, there's a handful of functional labs that I have found the most beneficial in my practice. And so the first one I like to look at is I like to do a DNA test.

This is going to be a different test from what you're getting with your Western doctor. They'll do sometimes a genetic test to see if you or your partner have any genetic issues that you're going to pass on to your potential baby.

But what I'm looking for is 46 different snips, which are your polymorphisms that are going to show me, okay. Do you are you going to be able to get pregnant or are you going to have a history of miscarriage?

Are you going to have things like pre-eclampsia or gestational diabetes? And then once we see this, how can we fix it and make sure that these things do not happen?

So that's the first thing that I'll do is look at the DNA. And then the other thing I like to do is we can't get pregnant without hormones. Everybody hears hormones.

And so I really love to look at hormones through dried urine versus blood work. Because blood work again is only looking for a baseline, and it's only a snapshot in time of what's happening, right.

When hormones are tested, it doesn't show us the fluctuations. It doesn't show us how things are being methylated, which means neutralized, detoxed or excreted.

So an example of this is when I run a dried urine test, I can look to see are you estrogen dominant? How is your estrogen being detoxed? Are you estrogen dominant because your detox pathways are clogged.

And so I like to look at a deep look into the estrogens. I also can see do you have adrenal fatigue? Nine times out of ten all my patients are in adrenal fatigue.

And now the question is, is asked, is this because they're in a fertility journey and they're so stressed? Or is it because a lot of Type-A personalities struggle with fertility issues?

We don't know why, but a lot of times I'll find that and then I can fix it holistically, get you out of adrenal fatigue so that your body feels safe enough to get pregnant.

And then the third thing I'll do is I'll run a microbiome analysis. So many things start in the gut. 90% of our immune system is made in the gut. We can see, do you have a leaky gut which is going to cause overall systemic inflammation to happen?

All of these things are going to cause fertility issues. And so I like to look in the gut and look to see, do you have an opportunistic bacteria? Do you have a parasite a fungus?

Do you have a leaky gut? And then I can again treat holistically and heal those issues. So the body does what it was made to do naturally. And all of these tests are looking to put the body into a homeostatic state so that everything is balanced, everything is optimal, and it's working the way that it should so that you can get and stay pregnant.

I love this so much, and one of the things that I would love to underscore, Dr. Kela, from what you said, is how traditional testing is generally looking at, a baseline or whether you're within normal range on in terms of your results, but not looking in the way that we do in functional lab testing.

whether you're within optimal range, which is really where we want and need to be to have our most ignited fertility and to be able to have our super babies, and we all, no matter how healthy we are, we all will have places that need some attention, need some love, and could be further optimized.

But the thing that I really want to underscore about that as as a scientist, what I know is that we base everything on the normal curve, and the normal curve is not necessarily what's optimal, it's what's normal in the sense that it fits the largest group of people.

So with, 96% of or so of people will fall within the normal curve, and then we'll have 92 to 96%, and then we'll have those outliers in the tails. Right.

And the testing, the ranges that traditional approaches are using are based on the normal curve. So just because something has become normative or represents the average person in the population doesn't mean it's normal, and it also doesn't mean it's optimal.

So I think that that's a really critical distinction for people to understand that we we might we might be within normal ranges, but we can be striving for more than that.

And what is becoming normal in our modern and Western world, especially, although this is spreading to other parts of the world as well, is it's it's not really working very well for us.

And we see that reflected in the skyrocketing rates of fertility challenges. Miscarriage rates are increasing every year, premature ovarian failure issues with male, sexual function and sperm counts, and then also the health of children, I mean, autism.

Now, one out of every 35 children is up to 36 children. Is autistic, and one out of every 25 boys is autistic. And the rates of autism increased with maternal and paternal age.

So these are things that we really need to be thinking about that actually. We don't want to be normal. We've got to be a positive outlier. And that's so much of what we're focused on in the semester.

Protocol. And we're making super babies. And I know that that's also what you're focused on when you're looking at these functional labs. So thank you so much for sharing those distinctions because I think that's really, really important for people. Why.

Oh sorry. Go ahead Dr. Kela.. No I was just going to say one other thing I wanted to throw in there before we move on is the other piece of this is we're looking at the body as a whole.

Everything works together. So when I'm looking at labs, I'm not just looking at your hormones, I'm not just looking at your gut. I'm looking at it all.

And then I'm also looking at you as a person and running through a full health history and trying to figure out, okay, is anything else other than what we see on these labs affecting your fertility?

Do you have past traumas? Do you have, you know, did you get some crazy vaccine when you were five years old? That's causing an issue? I look at you as a person, and I correlate that with what I'm seeing on these functional labs and looking at all of your body systems together instead of in isolation.

So I think that's a really good point to make because a lot of, you know, Western medicine, they'll look at you go to an endocrinologist, looks at hormones, you go to a gastro doctor, looks at the gastro, they're not talking to each other.

And all of the systems are combined and work together. So I wanted to make that point. Absolutely. That's why we

call it the fertility and pregnancy system.

Right? It's not just in the ovaries, the hormones, the uterus there. It all works together. So so important. Thank you so much for that. What do you think, Doctor Kayla are the best and worst fertility trends of 2024.

What are you seeing? Yes. So this is a little twofold. So the first trend that I am loving is that more and more people are being open to this whole lipstick alternative lifestyle.

They're open to functional lab testing. They're open to meeting their practitioner over zoom. They're open to adopting a different way to optimize their body and get pregnant.

And I feel like this has happened since the pandemic, and it's wonderful. I love that people are opening up their eyes, that there is a different way to heal and to health and fertility.

The other side of this is, and this is a bad trend that I'm seeing, is that some people still think that art treatments, things like IVF and IUD or their only option to get pregnant, and that it's a guarantee that they're going to get a baby at the end.

And I wish and I did a post about this recently, and I hope this doesn't step on any toes, but I wish we were as passionate about holistic health and healing our body and being as healthy as we can, instead of fighting for things that are going to jeopardize our health, like art treatments.

And so that's kind of the bad thing that I'm saying. I wish more people would open their eyes to a holistic health and healing. And not that there I'm not taking anything away from art treatments.

I think there's a time and a place for that. I think there's some people that that, that is their only option. You know, if you've if you have damaged fallopian tubes or you have, you know, something's wrong with your uterus or you have a structural problem that we can't fix holistically, definitely.

I want you to do IVF. But what I'm seeing and I'm sure you can agree with this, is younger and younger people are doing these art treatments and they haven't tried everything else.

They just are struggling. Even like a couple months. I had one lady recently, she's been trying for three months and her doctor told her she need to do IVF because she was 36 and I'm like, no, wait a minute.

We got a lot of work to do here. Let's wait a minute. So I think that's one of the bad trends I'm seeing. Yeah. This is incredible. And you're right, this the trend is toward, younger and younger people going to IVF as a first resort and being directed to IVF as a first resort and kind of jumping to it really quickly.

And I think I think that the and I like you, I actually, I know, I know that you said you're you believe there's a time and place for, intervention, medical intervention and IVF specifically.

I was born the same month and year, July 1978, as the first test tube baby IVF baby. And I think that that is so meaningful because I do believe that IVF is one of the most important advancements of the last half century.

So I think it's it's critically important. But I agree with you that we don't talk enough about the fact that there are potential health consequences, both for mama and baby, both short and long term, that it is not this magic pill that the popular discourse would make it out to be, and that even after six rounds of IVF, which can take up to six years and $180,000, that 35% of couples or individuals will still not take home a baby.

And if you're 42 plus that, that 96% will still not have taken home a baby after six rounds of IVF, according to the scientific data. So we've got to be talking about this.

But I think even more important than those realities that we don't talk about enough is something else that you've also touched on, which is that, hey, hold on, let's take a pause, take a breath, and let's do some work here.

We have a lot of work to do, because the thing is that these interventions are circumventing the problem. They are not addressing the problem or the root causes.

And the problem with that is that these these issues that are showing up in fertility are indicators of broader systemic problems, which will continue to cause problems in other systems and organs as you get older.

So in the reproductive system is the first place the problems start to show up because it's the first system that to age in the body, right? It ages at an even more accelerated rate than the rest of the organism, which is why fertility has, an expiration date on it.

Unexplained Infertility and Next Steps

And yet it's going to show up in the cardio metabolic system, in brain health, in so many other parts of life, and also in life expectancy, because we know that women who have fertility challenges are more likely and menstrual irregularities are more likely to die early before the age of 70, are more likely to have cardiovascular events, and that women who are able to stay fertile longer, have greater longevity.

And that's critical. So it's not just about getting at the root cause. So you get the immediate result that we that everyone's craving, which is their super baby.

But it's also addressing those root causes so that you can have better health span and better life span. So I really want to thank you for raising those issues, because I think we can be supporters and proponent of IVF and think that it's a beautiful option to be exercised with the in the right circumstances, with the right preparation going in.

Right. We always say, don't go into IVF without prime mastering because you've got it. You've got to increase your odds of being successful when the odds are pretty low that it will be successful in any one given cycle, and then you still got to do the work to increase the odds that you get to have your super baby, right?

Because you don't want just any baby. I mean, you want your baby to be as well as possible to. Yes, 100%. I love that, and I love what you said too, about the cycles, because this is a statistic that I think is just crazy.

But the more ovulatory cycles that you can have before you hit menopause, the less likely you are to have heart disease, dementia, Alzheimer's, diabetes as you age, all of these diseases because you know you're going through these menstrual cycles in these obligatory cycles, and it's given you all these beautiful hormones to really fuel your body for the things that it needs to prevent disease.

So if you're not and that's another issue we could have a whole nother show on. But I see younger and younger women that don't have a menstrual cycle.

And so I want to say, why are we not having a menstrual cycle. You're 25 and you don't have a menstrual cycle. There's something going on there and we need to fix that.

So even before you're ready to get pregnant, you're not cycling. We need to look into that because that's not healthy. 100%. I can't tell you how many mamas we have come to us in their 30s and 40s, and they have been told their whole lives that they should expect to have problems having children because they haven't cycled for years or a decade.

They've had very irregular cycles, either really long or really short. And and I'm always I'm glad they've made their way to us at that point. But I wish we had they had made their way to us ten years earlier, 20 years earlier, before they were ready to have their super babies so that we could have gotten in front of this a long time ago.

And I think that this is something that we need to talk about more and educate people about more. And I, I 100% am educating all of my three super babies and especially my, my daughter, who's my middle super baby, about their fertility, about her cycles that she will have and what a gift it is and how much power and potential it represents and how much it deserves to be revered and taken care of long before we're ready to have our super babies.

So I think this is a really, really important conversation. And Doctor Kayla, I know that you and I are going to continue having lots of conversations because we just have we have so many different places that we can we can go and we can really help to spread important education and information.

So thank you so much for that. I would love for you to tell us. What do you think people should do or what's your recommendation for people if, let's say they've been they've been diagnosed with unexplained infertility or fertility challenges and their labs look like everything is normal, their their traditional labs that they're doing either with their reproductive endocrinologist or their ob gyn.

What what do you recommend that they do at that point? Yes. So this is one of my issues. I struggled with unexplained infertility, and it was one that I was like, I'm going to solve this because there's nothing wrong with me and there's no reason why I should not be getting pregnant.

And so what we're talking about here today, the first thing I would do is run functional lab tests to see and to take a deeper look and to see what might be causing this unexplained infertility.

Because my philosophy is that's not really a real diagnosis. There is an explanation. We just haven't found it yet. So we need to keep digging until we figure this out.

And so that's the first thing I would do. I would look for a functional, you know, naturopathic doctor to doctor Cleopatra myself to dive in deeper and look and see if we can figure out what the root of this is so that we can optimize the body for fertility.

So that's the first thing I would do. And then once you run the functional labs, that's when the real work starts. And I would dive in deep with the things that you can control based on what the labs have told us.

What targeted nutrition do we need to focus on? It's more than just eating healthy. It's eating specifically for your body based on what your labs have told you and eating for fertility, certain nutrients are going to be more important.

Or fertility, health versus overall health. Are you getting enough folate? Are you getting enough? you know, but all these different nutrients that you need vitamin A, vitamin C, all of these things.

So focusing on that really targeted nutrition. Also let's target our supplements. I see so many people taking hundreds of supplements that they don't even need.

They don't even know how they interact with one another. And so let's do the labs and find out okay. What exactly do you need. And then focus and target our supplements in that way.

And then the third thing I would do is I see so many women this was me type A personality just working out crazy, eating very little. So let's focus on what can we do to manage our nervous system, to manage her adrenal glands, to calm some of this stress and and really focus on what are the stressors that we're putting on our body that we have control over, and how do we stop doing that, eliminate that, and doing things that nurture us and feel good.

So those are really kind of the three things that I would focus on. Do some lab tests, customize your program and your protocol, look at your nutrition, your supplements and how you're handling your stress.

I love that so much. Dr. Kela. Tell us if there was just one thing that someone could do to take care of their fertility and their future, super babies, what would that one thing be?

If you have to just say, just focus on this one thing? Yes.

Nutrition, Lifestyle, and Super Fertility

So as a nutritionist as well as a doctor, I have to say focus on your nutrition. That is the number one thing that you can do to optimize your health and your fertility.

You have so much control on what goes at the end of your fork. And you know, I said earlier that we want to target our nutrition, but your foundation should be whole food balance, nutrition, get a variety of different vegetables, feed your gut.

Those beautiful fibers. Eat low inflammatory foods. You know, lots of healthy vegetables and nuts and seeds and and almost more of a mediterranean style eating.

If you do eat meat, add a little fish, add a little bit of, you know, red meat. I think if you eat meat, that should be a condiment. It should not be the main focus of your meal.

And it's all about that variety and balance and then staying away from all the foods that inflame us, the sugars in the hydrogenated oils and the packaged foods.

I even recommend for fertility that we look at gluten and and dairy. Dairy is one where it's kind of if you're not sensitive to dairy, I think a little bit of whole milk dairy can be important, but on the other hand, it is inflammatory.

So we have to look at that and say, is this inflaming you? If you have PCOS, I would stay away from dairy. It's not good for PCOS. And so really looking at those inflammatory foods and eliminating them as best you can.

And I always tell people, I promise I'm fun. So these are. Treats. You can have one every now and then. If it's your birthday or a holiday, you know, have a glass of champagne, have a bite, you know, piece of cake.

But it's what you do every single day is what's going to make the biggest impact. So low. Inflammatory diet. Save that for treats. Yeah. I love that what you do every day is a thing that matters the most, because that's the that's what accumulates.

It's okay to have your your treats. I love that too. We are fun. That's true. Yes. I, I and I know sometimes it can it can feel hard to remember or reconnect with that.

When you're on this journey and you feel like you're working really hard for something that should have come easily. But the more we can connect to our pleasure, the more we're in our power, which we it's something that we don't talk enough about in our modern world and in our in our modern way of living.

Last question for you today, Dr. Kela. And then to to be continued many more times, because I love this conversation. What does Super Fertility mean to you?

What's the feeling that comes into your body, your mind and your soul when you hear Super Fertility? Yeah, I feel it's taking back control. As I said in the beginning, being your own advocate and knowing that you have so much power in what you can do to optimize your body.

So it's really diving in and figuring out what's causing the issue in the first place, and then working holistically to heal that issue through targeted nutrition.

The right supplements, the right lifestyle pieces. You can do this. You have the power and and I believe in you. And that's what I want to leave people with that they have the power and I want them to take that power back and really work to to solve this issue.

I love that so much. You have the power. You can take the power back into your own hands. And Dr. Kela wants you to know she believes in you. And I believe in you too.

We all believe in you. That's why we're here, putting together this amazing opportunity to learn from the world's best experts. Because we know with the right information and tools that direct you back into yourself and your your own power, that your your reproductive potential and your potential potential in all areas of life are unlimited.

And so thank you so much, Dr. Kela, for your wisdom, for your soulfulness, for all that you've shared with us today.

Thank you for being here with us. Thank you and thank you to you, mama, Dada, all humans, for being here with us today.

And I'll see you back here for the next Super Fertility Summit interview.