Introduction and guest background

You're watching the Restore your Mitochondrial Matrix summit. I'm your host, Laura, from Ontario, and I'm bringing you experts with fresh ideas and proven methods to help you boost your energy and fix your health so you can build the life you love.

And today, my special guest is Doctor Omar Simmons. Hi, mama. Welcome to the summit. Hi, Laura. Thanks for having me. I'm so excited because not only are you just amazing at what you do.

You're a friend of mine, too. And it's so fun to bring you on and talk about this now. I want everybody to know who you are. You're pretty impressive. You're.

You're a double board certified naturopathic doctor and endocrinologist, and your whole thing is about supporting power couples to create the family of their dreams.

And you also have this other thing you do. You train doctors who want to specialize in fertility. So pretty amazing. You've got a business that faces patients and another side of your business that helps practitioners.

And you know you're all over the place. You're the bestselling author of Fertility Secrets. What your doctor didn't tell you about baby making. And you're on a mission to help bring healthier babies into the world by creating healthier parents.

You're. You've been, featured on ABC Fox, CBS, KTLA, Mindbody Green and The Bump as a holistic mortality expert. So excited to have you here. So you tell us a little bit about you and what brought you into this.

And then what we're going to do is we're going to talk about fertility and mitochondrial health. We're going to talk about, women wondering how to increase their egg quality and mitochondria being really important to that piece and supporting fertility.

But first, let's talk about you and tell me about you. Sure. So I got into fertility. I was already practicing naturopathy medicine, for about five years by that point.

And I had just married someone. We had been together for a long time, got married. It was kind of a roller coaster ride to the wedding. And then, just like after the wedding, he started talking about having kids, and I was like, wait, what?

We didn't talk about kids. And, And I was one of those, like, young women that was like, no good that you need to have kids, you know? So it wasn't like the calling for me.

But when he started talking about kids, I was like, whoa, I need to really take a look at this. And, like, literally every time he mentioned children, my uterus would just turn and, like, what, run the other direction.

And I was like, okay, that's not a good sign. So I had really, like, my intuition telling me that was not going to happen. That was not a good idea. And thank God I like did not let it happen with that person.

But I it also like, sent me down this rabbit hole of looking into, what is fertility? What can I do for it? And really like, what I had been taught in medical school was, oh, your fertility is going to drop off a cliff at 35.

Make sure you have kids. You know, just like the same thing that everyone else learns. And as I was doing my research, I really, like, came to a different understanding.

Fertility myths and age-related decline

And just realizing that actually, that 35 myth starts in the 1800s in France in, not in science, but in churches. There are literally like records of Catholic churches that say that women stop bringing their children to get back baptized after the age of 35.

So fertility must obviously drop off of a cliff at 35. But if you're thinking about the 1800s, people didn't really have kids that old like they were starting on their family journeys earlier, weren't waiting till later in life and like, what was our lifespan in the 1800s?

So just a lot of questions that I was like, wait, well, this isn't even science. So then, like going on a hunt for actual studies. And there are now studies, small scale, but studies that show the difference between 25 to 29 year olds and 35 to 39 year olds.

And actually there's only a 3% decline in fertility. So 3%, 3% decline I did. So I come from the of course, I lived in the Western medical world for 20 years before I branched into functional medicine.

And, you know, in the medical, in the Western medical world, we talk about being 35 as high risk. Right. You're a high risk pregnancy or a high risk OB.

It's really like almost shaming frowned upon. You're the minute you walk into the office, you know, pregnant. It's like, whoa, you're are you really you're pregnant at this age, right?

Yes. Yeah, I was I was three. Why did you wait so long? I know I literally had patients 40 plus 40 to 43, 45 patients going to the fertility clinic. And the doctor is literally like, why did you wait so long?

Yeah, totally. Like, well, I didn't have the right partner or life happened or whatever. Like, why do I need to explain myself to you? Yeah, yeah. Oh. So fascinating.

All right, so let's jump into the nitty gritty here. So basically, we've established that it's BS that you can't you're pregnant in your 30s and beyond.

So let's talk about our big topic today, which is mitochondria mitochondria energy mitochondria for health mitochondria mitochondria mitochondria. We keep hearing about it from every expert that's coming on.

And it seems like it's really important to every aspect of health and everything you're trying to accomplish. It's really foundational. So how does your mitochondria affect fertility?

Well, mitochondria are essentially crucial to fertility because our oocytes contain 100,000 mitochondria. So it's like the oocytes which is essentially like the egg, right.

The egg that will eventually be mature and be ovulated. That egg has 200 times the mitochondria of anywhere else in the body. So if we think about what's happening there always physiology and forms function.

Right. So, our biology created these eggs with massive numbers of mitochondria because the mitochondria are crucial to the survival of the egg. The development of the egg and the the health of the future baby.

So if we don't look at mitochondrial health and, and obviously like all over the body, but specifically in the the old sites that are going to develop, then we are not looking at the full picture.

Right. So fascinating because, you know, all the experts I have coming on, we always talk about brain being your highest amount of mitochondria, Percell.

And what I'm hearing from you is there's only one spot where even higher, and obviously only women have this ability have oocytes. So, so fascinating.

Yeah. It is it is fascinating.

Mitochondria and egg quality

And it's really like the mitochondria are really going to help determine the health of the egg quality and the future baby. So for me it's like, you know, you read it in my bio.

It's like what I'm about is the healthier babies, right? And the way to get there is healthier human beings that are procreating. So if we're really focused on like how do we improve fertility, part of that has to be in like really assessing mitochondrial health and improving mitochondrial health and knowing that that's going to help improve quality.

So I think I'm hearing that if you've done some unhealthy stuff in the past and maybe harmed your mitochondria, there's hope we can we can work on this so we can fix this.

Yeah, yeah. Yes, yes and no. Yes, we can fix it to a certain extent. And what I find is that just so many of the couples that are struggling with fertility now, probably in their 20s, were living lives that weren't really conducive to fertility.

Well, it's just without any judgment. It's like we were maybe partying. We were maybe a lot of the women that are struggling with fertility are like a little bit like me, Type-A badasses that really did not think about having children or plan for children until later in life. So.

So it's, the stress as well as like that the to do lifestyle like do do do do do will kind of deplete overall health and optimal health functions. But then you add to it the things that are really detrimental to mitochondrial health or a quality that we can kind of even use them interchangeably a bit, because the things that will support the mitochondria also support equality.

So we if we did these things that maybe have impacted and depleted our fertility for years, it may take a little bit of time to get all of that functioning again.

That's not to say it can never happen, but it makes it harder. And then if if we do all of the things that will help to improve, we really have to plan for it to a certain extent, because it's not like, oh, I'm just going to like decide that I want a child and then get a child.

It's like, really, are we putting in the time and energy that it's going to take to repair the damage that was caused by the lifestyle that we were living for 20 years?

And at least give a few months of focused attention on improving that before getting pregnant. Right. And people stress out what I say, like give a little bit of time, but like I can give myself as an example, I, I worked on my fertility for a year before we even tried for a whole year.

I was like, we're going to try to have a baby soon. And this is like my now husband, we he he knew before I did. He's like, I want to have a child. Let's do this.

And I was like, not yet, not yet, not yet, not yet. And literally for a year. I was like, okay, I got to like, go through all the steps that I put my clients through and we don't take them.

We don't have to take a year. I just do it slower because like fall off that, get back on, fall off, get back on. So doctors make the worst patients. But I did I did like commit to the process until I felt like, okay, I've optimized every single piece of the puzzle.

Now I can like go and try to get pregnant. And sure enough, it worked very quickly, for us.

Lifestyle repair before conception

But I feel like like the amount of time and energy that I spent, making sure that we would, that I was in the right

state of health, was really important because I knew that I had I had not lived the lifestyle that was going to be conducive utility from the just the aspect of stress type illness, perfectionism, like all of the things that I knew that I needed to work on, I was like, okay, I got to work on all this.

And and that's the same for our client. So it doesn't have to be a year, but at least give yourself four months is the minimum because that's the changeover of the eggs, right?

So it takes about four months to really develop new eggs that are better quality. Okay. So in that four month period of time give us some tips to support your mitochondrial health, which is the same as supporting egg health.

So yeah let's talk about that. What are you having people do. Yeah. So I'll start with the foundations. And then we can move higher and higher up. So the first foundational thing is sleep.

And I feel for me I feel like that's the core of everything that I preach. Sleep needs to be ideally like the, the right amount of time for you, which can be 7 to 9 or ten hours for some people.

And then it's restorative. So it really takes into account I like the best question to ask yourself is, do you wake up rested in the morning? And if you don't, if you feel tired, if you feel drained, if you feel like, oh my God, if I don't get like my triple espresso, I'm going to keel over and die, then you don't feel so good.

So there's that level of work to do. The tips around sleep optimization, like you guys have heard this before, like making sure the room is dark, cutting out the blue lights or getting blue light filters.

Filter glasses before you go to bed. So for the at least it's around sunset. Essentially, you want to have some blue light filters and then, in the morning.

This is the part that is less commonly known is getting full spectrum light first thing in the morning, which really helps to turn off melatonin and switch to cortisol.

And this like back and forth switch from cortisol to melatonin is crucial to overall health. I'm sure you you're like talking about it all day. And then from the fertility side the melatonin is actually one of the most potent antioxidants that our body inherently produces.

So while we are sleeping, the ovaries are actually getting this message to rejuvenate. And that message is melatonin. So melatonin, like, yes, produced in the brain helps us sleep all of that.

But it's actually like flooding the the reproductive system and like giving this message of restoration and like just, good quality healing. So important.

Melatonin doesn't get enough credit for how important it is in our bodies. And for detox vacation as well. It's so good. So I'm here. You say it's my blackout curtains in my room that I wake up to a completely dark room, probably isn't the best way to start feeling amazing.

No, no, no, that's good. And like, as soon as you wake up, just open the curtains. I mean, really? Yeah. Yeah. I keep thinking, though. Maybe I should get rid of those blackout curtains and have something because it's dark out.

It's dark enough outside my windows. Maybe I should just wake up to natural sunlight. Yeah, it's it's, It's really interesting because I feel like kids do this naturally.

I watch my, like, almost four year old. He's very like, mom, it's sunny outside and I'm like, cool, you kid. And because it's like 645 in the morning, he's literally waking up the minute the sun is rising.

Sleep as the foundation for fertility

He is like, and like, of course we would love to sleep a little bit longer, but it's if we're in sync with the rhythms, then

really that like sunset to sunrise is the optimal time for rest, and then when the sun rises, your body naturally wakes up.

Yeah, yeah. So good. Okay. So what else? So now we've covered sleep. Sleep. All right. That was sleep. Food is probably the second pillar. And food, ideally is organic, not processed, non-GMO.

So the basics. Right. Outside of that, there are lots of potential blocks when it comes to food. So we might have food, that we think is healthy but is actually like inflaming our bodies and not really supporting the mitochondrial function.

So if if you know that food is certain foods are inflammatory for you, stay away from them. The common ones are like dairy, gluten, soy, right. The like corn, the things that are commonly inflammatory.

And then I would put sugar as probably the most inflammatory. And sugar is sneaking in everywhere. So it's not just like, oh, I don't eat sweets, I don't eat pastries, I don't eat cookies, but your pasta sauce has sugar in it.

You're, I went through this last call addressing your marriage. Yeah. Right there. It's everywhere. It's everywhere. And it's it's you. We might think, oh, it's such a small amount, but it's it's literally like, I can't remember the stat I heard, but, like, we consume, like, tons and tons and tons of sugar.

And I was like, we I don't contribute to that US statistics. So they're probably people like me. And that means other people are eating way more sugar.

So, I usually say like the upper limit on daily sugar intake is like nine grams of sugar. I usually try to keep it below that if I can, and I have my basis to. So, being honest, most of us are eating more sugar than we admit to our practitioner, to our partners, to anyway.

I mean, it happens. Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's it's amazing, like how much we're eating and sometimes we're not aware of it. So I feel like when I first got onto the kick and this is like the year that I spent like cleaning out my life, my diet, like literally everything, all of the different pieces, I work through it for myself.

And I was like, oh my God, there's sugar in everything, like wheat. I can't eat that anymore. Are you serious? It's not even sweet. But all of these things have sugar so that we can be addicted to them.

It's like we keep going back to the things that we think are, oh, like, this is my savory treat. And actually it has sugar in it to keep you hooked in.

So yeah, food manufacturers are smart. They want you always say they want you to come back and spend more money. So they're going to make sure that your brain is hooked on the food.

And that's why they've got a whole team of scientists perfecting the addiction of the food, the right amount of sugar and salt to just make you crave it, crave.

Buy it again. Buy it again. Yeah, yeah, it's pretty nuts. So finding the foods that are inflammatory, getting rid of those foods. What I have seen in just to think about like how this links back to fertility.

So, in inflammation in the gut will cause global inflammation in the body, will also cause on occasion, not all the time, but often we see that the impact on fertility will either be poor egg quality or what I call like eggs go to sleep.

Like they literally just like tap out and they're like, oh, I'm not doing this.

Food inflammation and sugar reduction

And the way we noticed the change is that, AMH will go down or will be low when we start working with people. It's telling us what Am is. Oh good question.

Sorry. Anti-malaria hormone. That's the key hormone that Western medicine uses as like the pinpoint number to assess how good your chances are of conception.

It is a terrible way to assess fertility, but it is it. If we understand what it is and we can say, okay, we can like see if it goes up or down, depending on what we're doing.

It's essentially the signal that the eggs send out the, the little like sites pre developed. They're sending out the signal saying, hey, I'm here. Check me out.

And the more of the signal there is, the more of sites there are in our ovaries. So the idea is that as we are aging, quote unquote, the number of oocytes is decreasing.

So AMH is also decreasing. When, AMH became popular in the field of fertility with the advent of IVF. So as they started doing IVF and studying it and all of that, they were like, oh, when AMH is below this particular number, that number is 1.06.

When AMH drops below that, we have really crappy outcomes on our IVF cycles. So a lot of the women that we work with who have low spots, supposedly low AMH, will be told either that they need egg donors or they're being rushed into an IVF cycle when it's really well known and well studied, that if that AMH is below one, it's really not going to be a great fit.

But they can get pregnant naturally, no problem. So AMH is a little bit of a farce and a little bit like gets too much, too much credit. But where I see it being important is if we can see like, oh, your AMH is kind of low, we do see like gut inflammation.

There's this, these underlying things that are happening that is going to impact how high or low your aim is. So as we improve the inflammation, your AMH can go up, which most women have been told that's impossible.

It'll never happen. I've talked to the doctors and they're like, oh, that one time was just a fluke. And I'm like, no, it's not just one time. Thank you very much.

So it's really like addressing that inflammation and especially the stuff that's coming up from the food that we're eating is going to help support better fertility.

Amy, can we guarantee that it's going to go up? No, because not everyone has inflammation. But if inflammation was one of the factors that was happening and we remove it, boom, AMH goes up.

Oh, so so you're taking out the inflammatory foods. You're helping people sleep. What else is important? Fixing, you know, fertility which means fixing mitochondria.

The beauty is I love it when we can kill two birds with one stone. So if if you are watching this and you want to grow your family, start a family and you've got other health conditions going on by fixing your mitochondria, you're literally fixing your fertility at the same time.

So I love this. So what else can I do? So the next tier would be, detoxification. And this is not like not necessarily like the hint to like go and get a detox kit from Whole Foods or something like, please don't or do a week long juice cleanse heal.

Yeah, yeah. But if you, if you want to detoxify, you're really looking at the things in your environment that are deterring fertility, egg quality, sperm health, and mitochondrial function.

And those things will be potentially things you've heard of. I think the biggest things right now in our environment are plastics. And I was I have some awesome, awesome, like, motivated couples.

Yesterday I had, it was talking to someone new and she's like, but what am I going to do? Like all of our grass fed

organic meat from Whole Foods is in plastic.

Detoxifying plastics and toxic exposures

And I'm like, yeah, like, there there are some things that we may not be able to do anything about. But then I said, and there are farmers markets and farms where you can, like, get locally sourced meat.

And her husband's like, yeah, honey. Like, we have that farmer's market right up the street. We can get meat from there. But I was like, yeah, great. Awesome.

So it's like those things sound like small things. But if you're buying everything in a package plastic thing, it's probably not doing any favors. That plastic that leaches BPA or if there's a whole slew of bisphenol compounds that, are being released into the food or the water or the liquids that you're drinking, eating whatever, that have an estrogen like effect, a so they're negatively impacting hormonal health, be they're also destroying the microbiome in the gut.

And simultaneously, like as the gut microbiome gets distorted, the reproductive microbiome gets distorted. So then you have the vaginal, cervical and uterine microbiome, which if it's out of balance, makes it harder for implantation to happen and harder for, the baby to develop and grow.

So, yeah, all of that from plastic, right? So don't drink your water out of plastic bottles. Right. When you go grocery shopping, come home and get stuff out of plastic and store it in glass.

You know, I it it blows me away. Like, even when I go to Trader Joe's, I can't. Once you know something you can't unsee it, right? So you go to Trader Joe's, which is really popular across the country, and they have all these vegetables wrapped in plastic like your zucchini.

So they've got it kind of wrapped by three at a time, packaged in plastic instead of just loose, right where you just grab what you want. Yeah. And so you got to think about this.

All these package, Jean, is a problem, right? Right. Exactly, exactly. So packaging and then aluminum cans, which are lined with plastic so that we know aluminum is not great for us, but now we line it with plastic, which is also not great for us.

So really like finding, ways to not use plastic wherever possible and outside of plastic. I would say the other things to detox. The average woman walks out of the her house with 137 toxins on applied onto her skin.

So shampoo, conditioner, soap, makeup, literally. Like every single thing that we use has crap. Tons of chemicals loaded in a that's not good for the skin.

So if you're thinking about like, how to not have saggy skin when we get old, like the easiest thing is to switch out the products that we're using, but then be like, really?

Like our skin is the biggest organ. We're absorbing all this stuff right into our bloodstream, which is okay if it was just one thing. But then you add this one and this one and this one and this one, and by the time you walk out of the house, you're like, in a puddle of toxins.

So getting rid of the things that we can get rid of, and I think we're going to offer will have a, detox guide for anyone who's like, oh my God, how do I get rid of this crap?

Because honestly, I feel like everyone can use this trying for fertility or not. This is relevant to all of us because we're all doing it. And should we not pay attention to the crap that's going into our body just because we're not trying to conceive?

Probably no. Like, for me, this is like, oh yes, forever. This is guys, just for now. Yeah. Obviously my my specialty is

not fertility. My specialty is energy and gut health and all the chronic health conditions that people have.

And so this is foundational to the work that I do as well. Even though I'm not trying to help people get pregnant, that's not my main focus. It's all about changing this environment that we're exposed to.

And then you mentioned something like, don't just go out and buy like a detox kit from Whole Foods. If you're you and your practitioner together, realize that, you know, through lab testing typically, or that you need detoxification, that is a very guided, specialized process with giving you detoxifying, strategy in the right order.

So the bottom out in your health, you want to talk a little bit about that. Yeah. Yeah. So there are a couple of things. One is, the clients that we do put on a detox because sometimes we will choose, like, actually, this is the right thing for us to do.

And sometimes it is intensive juice fasts or whatever. But we're not using fruit, right? Like fruit juice is the like worst way that we could be trying to detox.

But we will use like greens to help support liver function. There's like really specific ways to do it, but people are like, oh, you do a juice fast. Great.

I mean, just go do a juice fast. And I'm like, no, because you have to prepare your body to go into it. If you're going to go straight into a juice fast.

People try to do this all the time. I can skip the other days. No, you can't skip the other days. Like they're they're part of the plan.

Safe detox strategies and dietary variety

You you really like any type of extreme fast if your body isn't prepared, is going to throw your adrenals so out of whack, your insulin, pancreas, pancreatic function, that will take a long time to recover from.

So that's part A the dangers of it be is like doing this on your own when there isn't like some sort of guidance and support to even if let's suppose even you hear this and you're like, oh, I'm going to do a green juice fast.

If you're not supporting your detox through binders like things to cage the chemicals and toxins that your cells are getting rid of, they're recirculating in your system.

The sequestering of toxins into fat cells is actually a survival mechanism. That's what our body naturally does as a way to, like, safeguard us from the toxins.

So as soon as you start releasing all of these toxins, but you don't actually have good gut function to get all that crap out, you don't have good liver function to help support getting the crap out.

Then you've just like, flooded your system with a bunch of toxins. Now they're like recirculated in you, in your system and causing more harm than anything else.

So we really like if if, intensive detox is appropriate and it's not always appropriate for every person. It's really not the thing that we say, like, oh, everyone's going to go on this detox.

No, it's really specific for the type of goal that we're trying to reach. And it becomes like a therapeutic thing rather than like, oh, I'm just doing a detox and it's going to help me feel better.

Yes. Sometimes detoxes work that way, but I feel like most of the time, any change that we make in our body and people have said this forever, people will be like, oh, I used to be a vegan.

And then I started eating meat and I just felt so much better. And then simultaneously, you'll hear meat eaters say,

oh, I used to do paleo. And once I started being plant based, I feel better.

It's like any break from the mundane ness that our gut is exposed to is going to feel good. So the easiest, simplest way to do that on a regular basis is just making sure that you're getting lots of variety in your diet, right?

To get away from, oh, I oatmeal for breakfast and a sandwich for lunch or salad and then meat, meat and vegetables and rice for dinner. Like really trying to switch it up so that a your gut is being exposed to lots of different foods.

Those foods ideally are not causing inflammation. And the chances are going to be lower if it's going to be a food that your body doesn't see every single day.

See as in like it would be exposed to, so variety. And then the additional bonus of variety is really like 30 different plant foods in a week actually give you all of the antioxidants that you need to support mitochondrial health.

Yeah. So so let's let's wrap up with those nutrients that are healthy for your mitochondria okay. Great. You just like segue right into that. Awesome.

So probably my there are there are a lot of antioxidants. And the fertility world is full of like just take this. It's going to help your fertility. But notice that it was, it's the top tier.

It's not every single person needs every one of these nutrients. So I just want to couch this with, like, if you are trying to conceive, please, please, please do not go out and buy every single thing that I say here.

It's not going to be the end all, be all. It's really like targeted therapies for very specific goals. With that said, my favorite antioxidants, I will start with probably top number one I cannot live without.

This is glutathione. Glutathione is one of the most potent antioxidants for mitochondrial health and is really, really incredible for egg quality. So glutathione is my favorite.

NSC is an acetylcysteine. That's a close second. NK is a precursor to glutathione.

Key antioxidants for mitochondrial and fertility support

So there's that. NK can also be really specifically helpful for people with PCOS. There's a fair amount of research with NK and PCOS, so that might be good.

The next one, or I'll like just put in a category, which is like all of the, alpha lipoic acid, acetyl l-carnitine, green tea extract, SGC. There's a bunch that are all like Great Antioch's residents.

And then the last one I'll highlight is CoQ10, because literally every woman with fertility is on CoQ10. And CoQ10 can can be super helpful. Like, to be fair, that nutrient has a lot of studies and a lot of studies that say, oh, it's helped with natural fertility.

It's helped with IVF cycles. Why not just take it? So CoQ10 might be really, really wonderful. What I find most often is that there are imbalances in the antioxidant levels.

So if you like whey upregulate CoQ10, but you're deficient in things, basic ones like vitamin E and vitamin C, which are like foundational to fertility health, you are then, you know, not not really like doing yourself any favors by way, increasing one but not having a balanced level of the others.

So, if egg quality is an issue, I always say like the best, easiest approach is to get tested, know what your nutrient levels are, and then we can, like, tinker with the exact nutrients as needed.

There are there's a few others that are like berries, goji berries, assai berries, things like like the really dark deep

red and purple fruits will offer high levels of antioxidants that are supportive to egg quality.

So that may be another, another, you know, additional antioxidants to explore, right? And remember, when we're talking about quality, we're also talking about mitochondria or because they go together.

Everybody. Well, you have dropped some major pearls and support for our viewers. Thank you so much. Is there anything you'd like to say in closing? No, this was great.

I, I will say like this. What we've laid out today is supportive to fertility. So if you're trying to conceive, awesome. Use the tips and tools and all of that.

If you're not trying to conceive or it's like way in the future for you, no problem. Do these things now, because living this way is going to support future fertility.

And if you've already had your babies, cool, no problem. Keep doing the mitochondrial support. Because I write a country are not going away that they're like crucial to our health.

So they are they. I'm so glad that you've done this summit, because I think that they are. Mitochondria are just like probably one of the core, pieces of energy, overall health.

And just like healthy aging and all of that, like I think, yeah, I just think this is going to make such a big difference for so many people. So yes, thank you so much.

I want my thank you for being a part of this. And, we'll connect soon. Yeah I know, thanks for having me.