

## Episode 118 Transcript

(00:00:00)

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton

Welcome to the Dutch podcast where we dive deep into the science of hormones, wellness, and personalized healthcare. I'm Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton, Chief Medical Officer at Dutch. Join us every Tuesday as we bring you expert insights, cutting edge research, and practical tips to help you take control of your health from the inside out. Whether you're a healthcare professional or simply looking to optimize your own wellbeing, we've got you covered. The contents of this podcast are for educational and informational purposes only.

The information is not to be interpreted as or mistaken for medical advice. Consult your healthcare provider for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Welcome to this week's episode of the Dutch podcast. Today I'm reconnecting with a couple of amazing women who I had the chance to meet with when they were first founding their business. Their business really comes from a personal experience of pregnancy loss and miscarriage and a desire to really understand why that happened and make sure it didn't happen again.

That led them really to stumble on the amazing impact that men have on the fertility process. And something that they did not encounter in their own fertility journeys was encouragement for their partners to get more involved. So they founded a company that really worked on prenats for both him and her called WeNatal and really started to become a big part of the movement to get couples to really think about fertility as a co-ed sport. Our guests today are Ronit Menashe,

and Vida Delrahim, and they're the founders of WeNatal, a science-backed prenatal supplement company designed for women and men. As I said, they're fueled by their own personal fertility journeys, and they created WeNatal to start to shift the conversation around conception from a female-only focus to a couple-centric approach, really leading that fertility is not a women's health issue. With a background in health and wellness, they both bring passion and purpose to really re-imagining preconception care.

(01:59.5)

And we need all today helps to educate and empower couples to take a more holistic, inclusive approach to fertility and hormone health. So I'm really excited to regroup with these amazing women today and really hear what they have to share about all of the processes and changes that have happened in the fertility world. Well, welcome Rona and Rita. I'm so happy to get the chance to talk with you again today on the Dutch podcast. Of course, we

met a few years ago when you guys were just getting started with we natal and I was so inspired by your stories and.

you just you as phenomenal women and moms. So I want our audience to just kind of start by getting to know you a little bit. If you can share a little bit about your journey and you know, what led you to the path you're on today.

Vida Delrahim (02:40:00)

Thank you for having us. It's an honor to be here and we've admired your work as well. you know, our journey actually started one we didn't imagine starting, but we met at our Nike corporate office in LA around 18 years ago in our early single days. We were both establishing our careers and hitting the LA dating scene and becoming best friends.

And we never really imagined what would be born out of the heartbreak that we both suffered in our pregnancy losses. And so about eight years ago, I was running Nike global events with precision and accuracy. And yet I treated my own pregnancy like a casual jog. There was literally no supplements, no prep, just life as usual. And I went for that 14 week checkup and my OBGYN went quiet and I saw his face drop.

and the words that no parent-to-be ever forgets, I'm sorry, there's no heartbeat. And it's like torched in my memory. It was the awful, devastating moment in my life. And I was literally just handed like a pamphlet, told me to try again when I felt ready and sent me through a waiting room of glowing bellies and the devastation, I have to say, and the sheer horrific...

WeNatal (04:02.818)

you know, self-blame that went through my mind as I drove home, crying so hard my jaw ached. And I did what most athletes do. You you go into the research, you're like, why did this happen? But luckily for me, Ronit is my best friend and she was working alongside Dr. Mark Hyman in the deep in the functional medicine world, which was much more about root cause, which I wasn't familiar with. And she kept pushing me like, well, let's look into your labs a little deeper. And I'm like, they say they're normal.

but we quickly realized normal is not always optimal. And I went and found out I had Hashimoto's, I got targeted nutrition, lifestyle changes, and I later had my daughter Dahlia, who's now seven. And I thought the nightmare was over. I thought, you know, I've learned, we've grown. Fast forward to spring of 2020, the peak of COVID chaos. I was pregnant again and went to another appointment with that same deafening silence at the scan.

One week later, Ronit calls me and the same exact thing happened to her and both of us in tears. Her prenatal routine, her outcome. I mean, how could this happen to both of us knowing we thought we were doing everything right? We were two best friends with two losses and zero satisfying answers. And when it, when that devastating moment happened for me, I was, as Vida mentioned, working in the functional medicine

space. And so I knew better and I asked my doctor, what can I do to optimize my chances for a healthy pregnancy next time around? And she looked at me and said, there's nothing you could do. It's your age, just keep trying. And that didn't make sense to me. And I'm sure the you know, this type of answer wouldn't make sense to any of your audience, because we know that there's so much that you can do.

And what I discovered really floored me and shocked me that 50 % of miscarriages, you know, when you look at it from a high level are essentially because of male factor. And yet nobody was talking about sperm health. And to be honest, it was also, even though I was entrenched in the functional medicine space and I was doing things like,

WeNatal (06:26.166)

the Dutch test before trying to conceive and looking at, you know, my hormones and all of these things. I completely ignored my husband's health when we tried to conceive. So I built an evidence based stack for my husband and he committed to essentially three months of trimester zero. And Vita's husband did the same. Essentially, it was like high dose antioxidants for all of us, sleep, movement.

toxin cleanup, acupuncture for me, and no toxic substances for husbands, if you know what I mean, because they have their habits and...

We don't have to get into any specifics. We'll just say next the whole category.

We'll leave it at that. So they started to not only like obviously improve their sperm parameters, but they started to feel good, have better energy and focus and that, you know, we could go into that later on, but really there is a tie between like your sperm health and your overall health. And so nine months later at the age of 42, I gave birth to Emma and then three months later,

after me, Vida gave birth to her rainbow baby, Davina. So our little experiment of two or four

worked. And that's really what led us to meet up at a local Whole Foods is where it all started. We opened a Google Doc, it was called Bestie Co. And our first line of order was a prenatal for her and him. And that afternoon, like, we needle was born. It wasn't just about a supplement.

WeNatal (08:07.488)

It was a cultural reframe really about equal biology, equal Pratt, replacing the just do IVF with science back three month preparation for the best outcomes, no matter what route you take. And it was about education over fear, which in our journey was, you know, we had a lot of the fear and it was really about community over all the isolation that we felt in our personal journeys.

And today couples share labs or sharing heartbeat videos and we needle baby stroller picks. That's our why.

That's amazing. And I'm like literally half the chills and I know your story, but hearing you tell it again, it hits. And I think there's like so many places I want to go with our conversation. I don't even know where to start. But I think for me, it makes sense to start at the beginning, which is the cultural piece. Because I do think that that underpins the need for.

a partnership when it comes to making a baby. And of course, my whole practice, did 20 years in fertility care. I see it all the time. was talking with a doctor that I mentor who messaged me saying that the partner like wasn't getting involved and wasn't doing the basics that she'd asked of him. And unfortunately, that's not an unusual experience for me in my own clinical practice where I see a female partner. This is in heterosexual couples, of course.

a female partner takes the lead, takes the lead in feeling responsible, even if they're not responsible, takes the lead in getting educated, takes the lead in making the appointments, going to the appointments. And if it's their partner who has part of the problem, which is 50 % of the time, it's a male partner or there's a contributing factor, the male sometimes still the female partner is managing their contribution or like their improvement process. There's, there's a whole,

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton (10:04.44)

cultural responsibility placed on women like disproportionately when it comes to the fertility journey. I mean, it's complex for women more so than men, but can you speak a little bit to that and like how this concept of the partnership of the we and we needle has been received

by the community? And I'm sure there's been highs and lows.

for sure. I mean, did we have to hand our husbands their prenats on a little napkin while they were eating breakfast? Yes. If we could take the prenatal, their prenats for them, would we? Yes. But are we seeing the change? 100 percent.

I'd make sure there was food in stomach.

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton (10:44.462)

Yeah, there's so many great men out there. I'm not trying to malign any man.

100 % and men, for the most part, of course, they're great and they want the best for their children. They want the best for their future family. But they I feel like up until this point, we're not necessarily given the tools like it wasn't easy for them to, you know, contribute and we can go into into why. But when we started we natal, we really didn't know our men going to

take our supplement, are they gonna buy into this idea? And literally, it was like, you're investing hundreds of thousand of dollars into your company. And okay, are they gonna are men gonna even buy the product? And, you know, initially, when we first launched, it was mostly women buying the product for their partners. And it was mostly women showing up to our nutrition consults, because all of our subscribers get a free nutrition consult.

But I remember about a year after launching WeNatal, Lisa, our nutrition director called us and said, you're not gonna believe it, but a man showed up alone to a nutrition consult. That was like the moment where we were like, whoa, like things are starting to change and men are starting to take more ownership. And I feel like now we know about the...

stats around male fertility and decline in sperm health. And I think that conversation is also becoming more in the mainstream. feel like even here in LA, there was like this, the sperm contest. yeah. Sperm racing. Yes. Sperm racing. And I feel like now like it's becoming a little bit more like less taboo to talk about sperm quality. And we're so grateful for that because

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton (12:27.188)

with a sperm race.

WeNatal (12:40.362)

Yes, is the woman mostly driving the conversation still probably any post that we do on social media regarding sperm? We have thousands of shares and we know it's a woman sending it to their partner typically. Yeah, and I just say like me coming from the sports world, you know, oftentimes we were treating it as like this.

solo mission, right? Like for me, I was racking my brain on everything I did wrong and things I can do and like not even realizing dawning on me that my partner, my husband could do anything differently. And so when you think about it in sports, it's almost like if you're playing a game of football, you have this amazing offense and defense, but you're like literally putting your defense on the bench the entire game.

Let me just strengthen the offense more. Let me just strengthen the offense more. We can win.

Right, can't. How would you win if you literally have no defense? And so that's kind of what our husbands and I, they were just sitting on the sidelines and we were like thinking we were doing all the things when really we were just leaving out 50 % of the equation. And so once we shifted the frame to say fertility is a co-ed sport and both partners need to level up to get the best outcomes, it's completely changing this gender paradigm around fertility. And it's very exciting because, you know, fertility is not a women's health issue.

It's not a women's health issue. And I see that really shifting. And I think a couple of things like work in our favor or in women's favor in regard to that. One is I think social media has like made education around fertility so much easier for men and women. And the other thing is a lot of the newer data on fertility as a marker for overall health. And most of those studies are in men that we know now that when men have.

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton (14:23.566)

poor sperm health in their 30s, they are the first to have type 2 diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease, dementia, cancer in their 60s. It's a sign of disease in the body and it's one of the first areas affected. And I think with cultural look at biohacking and longevity and all these things that people are starting to be proactive, particularly in the highest performing men, they're the ones who are paying most attention, they want to biohack.

it becomes a marker of like, you're not doing as good a job as you think you're doing.

I completely agree with that. And Dr. Paul Torek, I'm not sure if you know him, he's a

reproductive urologist here. He's amazing. And we saw him speak once and he said that from his perspective, IVF is destroying men's health in general, because when you kind of like isolate this idea of like improving sperm quality and you just need that one sperm to fertilize that egg,

Men are not using it as an opportunity to look under the hood and see what is going on. Is there inflammation? Is there metabolic dysfunction? What are the things that are reducing the sperm quality? And so I do think that in our world of biomarkers, things are changing and it would be amazing if a sperm analysis would become part of that.

I'm just looking at. I've advocated. It's a thing. Totally agree. Once men hit their 30s, it should be done maybe every five years. See how it is. You can even pay for it yourself. But see how you compare. And I think one thing that men don't realize, I'm going to give your podcast for you to share all this information. Because I love this conversation. But when we look at sperm.

WeNatal (15:53.285)

I think

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton (16:13.006)

measures when you look at a semen analysis, when men are told they're normal, what normal is when it comes to semen, this is World Health Organization, is that they're better than the bottom fifth percentile of healthy men. So if you are normal, when we look at ranges of normal, 100 % would be like the healthiest. The 50th percentile means you're right in the middle of the pool of healthy men. Normal, you could be the sixth from the bottom out of 100 and be told you're normal. so I think

When I told my male patients that, because they would come in and be like, well, yeah, we're both here, but I've already had a semen analysis and it was normal. So I'm fine. The problem's got to be with her. It's like, you might be normal, but if you were 100th in a race and you came in 94th, do you think that's the best you can do? Or do you want to be middle of the pack or do you want to be front of the pack? And do you think that that different positioning might influence your ability to get pregnant or the health of the child?

You know, it's a total frame shift and I don't blame anyone for that except that people don't know.

People don't know and it's the same in regards to really like any other lab marker. know, when you look at, in Vida's case, she had normal thyroid levels, but it wasn't optimal. And so I think we are so passionate about the conversation of preconception, trimester zero, what you could do before because...

This isn't just about getting pregnant. It's really about having the best possible child that you can have. Like would you want a six percentile child as far as like IQ goes, cognitive? No, you want to give your child the best blueprint for life. And I think what's so amazing about sperm and you know, we joke that I talk about sperm all day long because it's so fascinating and we actually had lunch with.

WeNatal (18:08.662)

a reproductive urologist the other day and I was like, you know, who would have ever thought that I would literally be talking about sperm all day long? We've come a long way and I would have never known that this is what I've been would be talking about, but it's just so interesting to how dynamic sperm is. And I always talk about how men are like true, could be the true superheroes of their family when it comes to conception because

I you have come a long way.

WeNatal (18:37.388)

You know, for women, we can improve our egg quality, but we're not always regenerating eggs. But men have this dynamic ability to regenerate sperm every 72 days. And, you know, what it what that means is that with like lifestyle nutrition, addressing toxins, all of these things can completely transform sperm quality in two to three months.

And so it's kind of like this idea of like people think that your fertility is like a hard wire issue, that it's fixed, that it's unchangeable. But in sperm particularly, it really is like a software that you can kind of like push for a major update every 72 days. So you change the code, which is like the diet, the nutrients, the sleep, the toxins, and you can completely reroute the outcome and...

when we learn that, that completely flipped the script for us. And I think that, yes, the power of social media is amazing because we share this information, we slice and dice it and find different ways to make that impact. And men are slowly coming on board.

Mm-hmm. That's great to hear. You know, I've had one personal interaction with kind of a



friend who I was helping to conceive. I was more close with the male partner and met his wife through the fertility journey. He was very open to whatever we could do to help them conceive, but they suffered a miscarriage. And I want to talk a bit about miscarriage here as well, but it was one of the first times we were actually like at a corporate event. and we'd been chatting like on the roof of this building, the little rooftop.

barbecue party and he really came to tears feeling so feeling helpless in the process. You know, they suffered a miscarriage and for him it was like, this is the one thing I should be able to do is make a sperm that can create a baby. And here I am, it's, you know, my purpose in life and I'm not able to do it. But what really stood out to me was that it was so clear. He loved his wife so much and he knew she was struggling with the loss of the pregnancy that they'd experienced.

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton (20:49.376)

And there was also not really a space for him emotionally in that process. He felt like he had to be a caregiver to his wife through this process, but it was one of the first times I really thought about what a crushing blow it was for him and probably for many partners who don't have the space to like talk about that or express that. Have you had reception from men in that way as well as as things that have really surprised you? mean, of course you have your own husbands, you know, intimately when you go through a tragedy like that.

But what about others?

I think we're starting to see more and more of the men speak out about how it's impacting them. think for a long time it was to your point, the masculinity and the caregiver and the situation and really they're mourning just as much as we were mourning, but yet didn't have an outlet the same way because our body was going through it. We had procedures done, right? We had so many tangible things that we had to deal with that it's easy to be like,

they're not suffering the way we are, right? It's very easy to that narrative. But the reality is, I know my husband was suffering. I know hers was too. And they struggled with one, how to communicate it and two, how to support during this time. And so I don't think I have the perfect answer except the fact that we know nutrition was one way to help partners co-create, but also why we create the journal. It's subtle. It's something that we wish we had, but we created the WeNatal Manifestation Journal.

to really instill some gratitude in the couple, some manifestation and getting their heads in

the right place, some talking and questions they could do together, just subtle tools of saying, yes, you went through an awful time, but let's give you some tools to help you with the emotional and the mental aspect, which are things that I really struggle with and tools I wish I had.

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton (22:37.39)

Yeah, to transform that. That's great. Yeah, I think about it, the process that a couple going through infertility has to go through together. It is such a representation of how as partners you can handle every struggle that comes forward in your life. fact that it does take two, the fact that you can partner and work together to achieve what you want to do and how neither of you can really do it on your own.

Absolutely. Yeah, I always I mean I really admire we both created this company out of she had two miscarriages I had one but going through infertility and what we hear from so many of our couples people that go through rounds and rounds and rounds of IVF and they stick together You know that that's a couple that you know, we'll we'll get through anything in life

Yeah, absolutely. Now one of the things that I'm curious about is having your own personal experience with miscarriage and going into the doctor and hearing them say, there's nothing you can do, just try again when you're ready. Now that you've been immersed in how much published literature there is out there, what have been the biggest things that have surprised you?

Well, first of all, yes, there is so much public literature about the power of nutrients, the power of diet and lifestyle and fertility. But I will say that still to this day, OBGYNs and fertility doctors really don't talk about the power of, I would say, like specifically nutrients. Maybe, maybe some of them that are like a little bit more

In the know, we'll talk about CoQ10 and improving egg quality. But really there's such a lack of that education when it comes to the medical community or like at least the conventional medical community. And so a lot of the doctors that we've partnered with come to us for that education, come to our nutrition team. And so that has really been like a surprising factor that we are

WeNatal (24:50.024)

know, educating doctors out there. A lot of doctors will say, you know, take any prenatal, they are all the same as long as it has folic acid. And for us, we know that that's not the truth. Like

we would have never gone into the business of prenatal supplements if we didn't think that we could change the, that this would be such a game changer.

There are so many prenatsals out there as you know, Jacqueline thousands of brands and Like I'll give you an analogy here from Los Angeles like we have this one mall developer his name is Rick Caruso who reinvented the malls and when he was You know kind of buying these malls and people said to him, you know, like malls are dead like why are you why are you doing this and

And he innovated the malls. You go into his malls and there is spaces to hang out, beautiful malls, restaurants. And he completely like reinvented the mall game. And that's what we're doing with Ween Adel because the nutrition, like we have 24 key nutrients in Ween Adel.

I would say the most popular prenatal on the market right now has 12 key nutrients. And when people tell me they take this prenatal, am, I mean, I'm a little, don't want to like, again, and we're not about like fear mongering at all, but I'm a little bit like knowing what I know and the power of nutrients and high dose nutrients in the right dosages, in the right forms. makes such a big difference.

What are the biggest differences, like if you could call out the top improvements or upgrades that you've made for the We Need a Product over what you see in the market generally? What are the things that you think are the most differentiating?

WeNatal (26:42.414)

So I would say like for your audience, they're probably like in the better prenatal category. Like they're not walking into a CVS and buying a prenatal.

Not necessarily. mean, we have listeners from everywhere. but but you're right. Maybe some know about methylated B vitamins, for example.

Yes. Yeah. Yes. So let's talk about like the better prenatsals. I would say most of the better prenatsals on the market have eight capsules per day. And even like their dosages are not exactly like in the right dosages. So for instance, choline is one key nutrient that supports baby brain development. And we natal has 400 milligrams of choline. More many prenatsals on the market have way less than that.

Like 25. Like unbelievably less, I'll say. Or none. Yeah, I see that too.

And the average American woman is only getting 180 milligrams of choline from her diet. like, let's say she's vegan or let's say she doesn't eat eggs, she's getting like way less. And the data shows that you need 450 milligrams when you're pregnant and 550 when you're breastfeeding. for us, the dosages are critical, but also

WeNatal (27:55.724)

you know, because I was working in the functional medicine space and also just generally have been into wellness my whole life. Like for me, swallowing a lot of pills is no big deal. And so I actually didn't think that there was an issue with the prenatal that we were taking. We were both taking metagenics plus one, but we kind of had to add things to it. We had to add vitamin D, we had to add more folate, iron.

and for me it was like, okay, well whatever. I'm just like, gonna swallow all my pills. throw them all in my mouth and I take them. But then this one over here was like not able to actually stay consistent and not able to take her prenatal every day because it was just too many pills. So we just thought like women deserve better and women need like, and I'm sure you see this with your practice, like you

If you're consistent, that is what's gonna drive the best outcomes across the board and like any protocol you're doing. And so we natal has three capsules a day while most of the better prenats have about eight capsules per day. So, and then it's, know, the fillers, even some of the better prenats have fillers. have zero filler in our prenatal and just what that means for us.

It's a little bit of like a manufacturing nightmare. It's more costly. Our product expires quicker than other prenats, but the filler A is some of it is bad for you. And then it takes pills, pill space. So a lot of times when you're consuming eight pills a day, it's because a lot of it is filler that's helping manufacture. And then when you look at the like,

let's call them store-bought prenats, a lot of them are using ingredients that are not bioavailable. So they're using folic acid and not folate or methylfolate. Their forms are not, it's just like not comprehensive. Like they're using one form of vitamin A, but not the other. And then there's the brand experience. Like for us, when we imagined we natal becoming part of people's life, and especially because you want to bring the partner on board,

WeNatal (30:06.06)

You don't want to we didn't want to hide our supplements in a cabinet. We want it to be beautiful. We want it to be something that you could put on your nightstand or in your kitchen or in your bathroom. So you're like reminded to take it. You take it on a trip. So then there's the brand experience aspect that was like very important to us and kind of like ties into our backgrounds at Nike. Like because we want this to be a mainstream movement.

It has to also be like a beautiful part of your life.

love that because it is a beautiful part of life and I think when you can go into pregnancy with preparation, you know, and with that positive intention and that positive preparation, it can, really is a beautiful thing.

Yeah. And I think my most shocking realization in the supplement space was that there is really no one regulating. And so it really is the wild west. And you can just look in the shelves and shelves of prenats and just read the marketing and take it for fact. But if it's not third party tested, you actually aren't sure that the label is actually what you're getting. And so we obviously third party tests, we share our results. We are uber transparent because we realize

This is not only arguably one of the most crucial times in your life where you're ingesting something to conceive your child. So we want to make sure the utmost integrity and anyone listening, like if a brand is not third party tested, you probably don't want to take it. And I will say like a lot of brands say they're third party tested, but then you reach out to them and ask for their documents and they don't send them. That's a big red flag. We actually share our

WeNatal (31:44.162)

third party testing results on our website for every single lot that we manufacture. And it's there. We used to just send them to those who asked, but we just felt like it's such an important time to be so transparent about everything that you do and like the quality and the integrity of the brand. that's another big thing that sets us apart.

It's wonderful that you do that because that's an investment. mean, there's like requirements for testing by the FDA, but they're very basic and most companies put them off to a third party to conduct them and manage that like your ingredient supplier. You just take the C of A's at their face value certificate of analysis and assume that what they give you on the C of A was tested and it's true. But in an international supply chain now, there's a lot of opportunities for

reduced integrity, cutting costs, et cetera. So I love brands that take the ownership of that and not only that, but like use their platform to educate customers and make it easy to see the testing that's done. It's an investment. So thanks for that. Cause not every brand's doing that as you know.

Yeah, sure. I mean, we wouldn't never create a product that we wouldn't take ourselves. And we want to know that what we're giving to the consumer is the best possible version of what we intended to create.

We'll be right back.

Speaker 3 (33:09.678)

If you're a clinician seeing more women in their late 30s to early 50s who don't quite fit the typical menopause profile but are clearly not feeling like themselves, this is for you. We're thrilled to announce the release of our new course, Perimenopause Management. This is a comprehensive, evidence-informed course designed to help you identify and address hormonal shifts before your patients reach menopause. You'll get clinical tools, treatment strategies, and real-world case examples to elevate how you support women

through this often overlooked transition. Make sure you're a registered Dutch provider to gain access to this free course. Visit [dutchtest.com](https://dutchtest.com) to become one today.

We're back with the Dutch Podcast.

So I want to talk a little bit more about male fertility. Um, and really like we talked about earlier, oftentimes when we think about the male fertility journey, they have a sperm analysis, semen analysis done, and then it's like the end of the conversation. But there's obviously so much more to the picture. What can you share about what's been most effective, you know, in the communities that you've built around that? Like how do you men use semen analysis to make the right changes?

We actually like, so starting off with when we, before we even launched, we actually did a beta test with 10 couples and we did a before and after semen analysis. And what's so amazing is that nowadays you have so many companies that have like at home semen analysis, so they make it easier. And then some of it, some of them even go deep beyond just like the measures of count, motility and morphology.

WeNatal (34:52.088)

they go deeper into like DNA damage. And so we did that with 10 couples before launching. It was like our own mini clinical study, but it's not a clinical study. And we saw such an improvement because, you know, using antioxidants like CoQ10, NAC, vitamin C, high dose, you can really improve sperm quality by reducing oxidative stress.

we saw those markers. That was just something that we did for ourselves. But now we're actually in the midst of a real clinical study and we're so excited to be able to publish results, hopefully in a few months, that really show the improvement of before and after taking a product like WeNatal.

It's fabulous. I know Dr. DeMari, I just want to call out, I did interview Dr. Fris DeMari, who does a of work with you guys and was part of your formulation team, which I want to just call out for listeners because you can listen to that. was a few episodes ago, but I encourage you to check that out because we get into a lot more of the science behind male fertility and behind semen change for the positive or the worst. So you can definitely listen to that if you want to get more information around that. So

It's wonderful that you guys are participating in the study. And it's such an interesting thing because I've seen this data too in other studies with other like comprehensive prenats versus folic acid alone. There's been studies like that which show such tremendous outcomes with a combination of nutrients. The question is like, why do we need that so bad? The multivitamin becomes like this, really this key for, you know, I call it a prenatal for men and women.

But a key that you see such transformation, for me it really highlights the gaps we must have in our lifestyle and diet today and like why it's so necessary. Because I hear from a lot of people, well, why do I have to take a pill I eat well? But can you speak to that a little bit? Because you see it have an impact, even in couples who are proactive and healthy and engaging in healthy lifestyle.

WeNatal (37:05.474)

I think my mom's even one of those people who was like, why don't you take supplements? Because I think in their generation, they were just taught that all your nutrition should come from food and you should eat, you know, all the colors of the rainbow and get it from food. And that probably worked for our parents or grandparents generation. But now our soils are depleted as I'm sure you know, and our food are just not as nutritious as it once was. Even if

it was our full time job to eat for pregnancy, eat for fertility, it's quite

impossible, if you will, to get all the recommended dosages that you need to build those nutrient reserves. And so, you know, there's tons of fun analogies that, you know, eating an orange in our grandparents generation is equivalent to eight oranges today. And so you get the idea that like you would have to eat exorbitant amounts of each thing to actually get what you need. And so what we like to say is that the supplementation is just like an easy insurance policy in addition to eating healthy. It's not

It's not a cheat sheet to say like, can eat fast food all day and take the supplement and be fine. It's really that you want to put your best foot forward. so eating a clean diet, trying to eat organic, trying to eat clean and adding the supplementation is like the best insurance policy to make sure you're getting the recommended value and build those nutrient reserves. And I think the other aspect is stress. Just like the stressful lifestyle that we're living. As you know, like stress can...

like reduce absorption of nutrients and all of that. so I think, you know, and especially during times of stress, I could say like for me, we just talked before the podcast about experiencing the fire that that I did the the first thing that I did.

when I knew I was gonna be in such a stressful time of my life was order WeNatal because, know, obviously I lost everything that I had in the fire. ordering those nutrients, making sure that I'm like at the bare minimum, like taking those key nutrients because stress really depletes you from nutrients. And so I think it's like such an important thing. It's really low hanging fruit, but like Vida said,

WeNatal (39:18.53)

You can't supplement yourself out of a bad diet. Like you have to also like do the work and do all of the things.

What is the rest of the work? When we talk about getting ready for pregnancy, I know you spent a lot of time in this and one thing that I really appreciate about WeNail is it's, you know, have the products to assist, but you're not selling the product. You're teaching about everything that can be done to really help a couple have a healthy baby. What are the other factors that you really focus on?

I think like, you know, for us like that education part is key because you spoke about Dr.



Afruz-Demiri. So she was actually my functional medicine doctor and has become like such a great friend throughout the years. And I think because Vida and I have had access to so many incredible fertility doctors, naturopaths, people like you.

And we were able to learn from all of these incredible people for our own journeys. It was so important for us when we created WeNatal to be able to share that knowledge on an ongoing basis with our community. So what are the things I think, I don't think any of this is gonna surprise your community. It's obviously movement. We're spending...

most of our time sedentary and so it's movement but also not overdoing it with movement. I think that there's also this idea, especially for women, of high intensity workouts and if you're already stressed, just focus on moving your body and do what feels good for you. There's balancing your blood sugar because we know that

WeNatal (41:09.144)

For instance, PCOS is the number one cause of infertility in women. So balancing your blood sugar and focusing on a clean diet, we know that there's research around the Mediterranean diet and fertility for both men and women. So what does that mean? Eating lean protein, nuts, seeds, legumes, colorful veggies, eating the rainbow. There is obviously like detoxifying your life. We talk a lot about how...

Probably the most toxic places in your home is your bathroom and your kitchen. like making sure that you're, you know, reducing plastics from your household, your cleaning supplies. Nowadays, it's so easy to have your skincare and everything that you put on your body be clean, but also like not feel like there's a trade-off.

we were there for the early days, the three of us.

It was rough. We were there for the early days and it was a trade off. But nowadays it's like you can get the most amazing makeup and it's clean. And I will say Jacqueline, now I have a nine year old. Like my daughter uses my stuff, my makeup, my skin, you know, anything I put on my skin. And I don't have to worry that she's putting on something that could be toxic. Like when we talk about all of these changes, you're really setting up your household.

to be the type of household that you wanna welcome children in. Like you don't want your kids crawling on your floor and having, know, bleach all over the house or, you know. So we talk about that. So like the cleaning supplies and all of that. And we actually have a

downloadable guide at [wenatal.com](https://www.wenatal.com) slash guide that we worked on with Dr. Demeery with like nine things you could do as a couple to support your fertility.

WeNatal (43:05.482)

I think there's also this idea of things that are common and maybe legal, especially here in California, like let's call it marijuana, alcohol, smoking, vaping, those things.

Even other common illegal drug use. mean, I have a lot of clients that come in that do cocaine every weekend or MDMA or whatever they're doing in the party scene that it does have an impact for sure.

It has a big time impact. so it's like, and we always say like, you are creating a blueprint for your child's life. Like we talk about passing down like our genetics, like our hair color, our skin color, but you're also passing down your stress, your inflammation, your resilience through epigenetics. So your nervous system becomes part of your child's.

emotional architecture, your healing becomes part of their protection, your burnout becomes part of their burden. So it's not just about like, is my child going to get like my body type or my hair? It's bigger than that. And so when we talk about the sacrifices that you have to make, and really for the men, it's for a short, very, very short timeframe, like it's a no brainer to us.

Yeah, absolutely. It's interesting, like thinking about stress is a big one. Stress increases when you're trying to conceive and paying so much attention to it as well. the impact on the microbiome and all the downstream absorption is such a big one.

WeNatal (44:44.076)

Yeah, and that's why honestly, we created this manifestation journal not we know now that there is science between gratitude and your overall health and overall mental health and reducing stress. And so that was one way of focusing on stress for us. you know, everybody knows what helps them like meditation is not for everybody, but like finding ways how to

reduce your stress. mean, you're never gonna, we live, the stress is not gonna go away. We know that. But how do you handle stress? For me, it's like doubling down on like my sleep hygiene and making sure that I'm investing in my sleep. for me, it's like, and for Vida, would say like exercise helps her with sleep. So you have to figure out what works for you. But finding these tools before you have kids.

makes it so much easier when you do have kids because you know that like once you have kids stress becomes like like compounds to like another level.

Yeah. And I think, I mean, I love this has come up a couple of times, but when you're preparing for pregnancy, you know, you talked about like your home, right? It's it is. It's like you're like baby proofing while you're trying to conceive in a lot of ways when it comes to toxins. And I'm hearing you say it again now with you're almost baby proofing your own lifestyle and your own self care. And I think you're totally right. As hard as you think, as busy as you think you are when you put children in the mix after it's even harder. getting those pieces that are essential for your own personal health.

in a routine where I, I call it like my non-negotiable. Like I do like 30 minutes a day of exercise, the lifting or walking. It's a non-negotiable for me. And the reason why is because I know if I miss it for a couple of days, everything starts to go downhill. Right. So sleep is another one, but like, what are those non-negotiables and how can you get them in as habits right now? So I love that you're bringing those things up because it's so critical. Yeah. What have been the biggest shifts for each of you, your yourselves?

WeNatal (46:43.65)

So important.

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton (46:49.826)

going through this process, entrepreneurship, growing a business with your best friend, helping so many couples along their journey, what have been those moments you remember or those changes that you've seen in yourself that kind of surprised you?

Great question. think entrepreneurship is a roller coaster of ups and downs. Yeah. It's nuts. mean, we both came from the corporate space. So I think what we're learning and growing on a daily basis, it's fascinating from like the highs of growing your social media and reels going viral. And then the lows of like manufacturer delays and worrying that your customer might not get their product in time and things in your control, things out of your control.

It's been so fun. We're learning so much. I'd say one thing that I think we've doubled down on this year that maybe the first two years of being entrepreneurs we didn't was practicing what we preach. We went all in. We had newborns and we started a business and I was still doing a little bit of my corporate job. And so there was no time for ourselves. It was all just give to the

kids, give to the business. And we took a step back this past year and said like,

enough is enough. We need to practice what we preach and to your point, the non-negotiables about working out, take some meetings and make them walking meetings, eating healthy, prioritizing protein, just like really giving ourselves the foundation to be our best selves. And so that's a big shift that I'd say this year we've taken and we've made our workouts non-negotiable. We hit saunas, we're doing a meal plan and getting organized in our eating so it's clean. you know, the protein was a bit hard for both of us, I must say.

So just some of those fundamentals, we gave our whole team our rings so we can track our sleeves and be accountable to our stress and all the stats. And we really want to grow this company from a place of wellness and all the things that we may or may not have had in our career growing up. And I think for me, I'm just like really, really thinking back to like what surprised me when we created WeNatal, it truly came from a place of

WeNatal (48:59.198)

something that we wish we had. And it was very genuine with like, the best intention. Like we never thought that we would like we didn't sit down and say like, what's a great business opportunity.

This is a white space like no one's doing this. It really we and we didn't really put much thought into like, I would say like the business side of things like how are going to scale or, you know, we created our product is on subscription. We you can also buy it one time, but we did that because we know that when you're pregnant, you want.

you know, the prenats to appear or because you have to take them long term the same way you want diapers to appear because the babies use the diapers. And so I remember a moment of after launching we natal and when we launched, we had a crazy wait list because really like there was nothing like this on the market back then.

when we sent the email out that the product is live on the website, I remember being on a call with Vida, Penny and a few other people. And Penny was like, my God, you could go on Shopify live view and see how many people are on your website. And so I wish I screen recorded that moment because it was like nothing that we had planned. There was no like business plan like.

We are going to forecast X amount of people buying your product and X amount subscribing.

There was none of that and thousands of people bought. we then my next aha was like when I think it was like breastfeeding Emma and I saw like subscription refills on my phone, like people getting their product again. And I was like, my God, I can like,

WeNatal (50:56.652)

be with my child and like business is happening behind the scenes. And of course, like so many business people like go into things saying, I'm gonna launch a subscription business because then, you you're constantly making money without even like having to generate, you know, drive more customers. But for us, really like setting up the business and it's successful as it is because it came from such a need.

and from such a genuine place and has really become our life's purpose and our life's mission. And when I think back to my miscarriage, of course it was like the most painful thing that ever happened in my life. And it was really the first time I felt like I experienced trauma. But I am so grateful to that soul that came into my life.

because it gave me so much purpose and it is making such an incredible impact on so many people. And I wouldn't have changed it and made it any other way.

That's a beautiful revelation. So thank you for sharing that, like the reflection back to the impact that unborn child, that little spirit can have in lot of lives. Well, I'm grateful for both of you as well. I mean, for sharing your stories and I see that too. We talked very early on in the formation and what really stood out to me was

We're so grateful.

Dr. Jaclyn Smeaton (52:30.092)

that it was a heart-driven business. I mean, for me to see women be successful while you're raising a family, pursuing your passion, it's a constant inspiration as someone who loves to see women successful in the world. In fact, I think the best stories are the ones where you're like, well, I was breastfeeding my baby. I saw this habit in my business. I wish we heard that more often because it's absolutely fabulous and you've really found a good way.

to get balance out of that to make an impact in other people's lives. So thank you both for the work you've done.

Thank you, Jacqueline, and you're an inspiration to us as well. think that you're a pioneer.

mean, we had reached out to you because there weren't many doctors that were doing what you're doing, focused on the couple, focused on preconception, giving people the tools and the hope. And we're so grateful for you as well. Thank you.

Thank you, that's so sweet. Well, I really appreciate you guys being on today. And like I said, we also interviewed one of the doctors on your advisory board, Dr. Fruz de Mary. So if you wanna listen to that and get more deep into the science behind fertility, I really encourage you to check that out because that was fabulous as well. She is right up there with the two of you of incredible women doing great work. So thank you both for that. So I'm really grateful to you guys being on today. I'm sure people that are listening wanna know more about

how they can learn more about WeNeedle's products and maybe connect to your social media to be able to stay in the mix of this conversation. So what are the best ways for them to get in touch with you?

WeNatal (54:02.466)

We sell currently direct consumer on [wenatal.com](https://www.wenatal.com), but we are also soon to be on full script. So look for us over there. And then our social is at [we underscore natal](https://www.weunderscorenatal.com). So follow us along. And then one more thing is we have a free master class with 11 free episodes with different experts from reproductive urologists to pediatricians to functional medicine doctors to naturopaths at [weenatal.com slash masterclass](https://www.weenatal.com/masterclass).

Awesome. I'm sure that's really rich with info, so we can't wait to share that. We'll put those links in the show notes, so make sure you check out today's show notes from wherever you are listening. And thank you guys again for joining me.

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