



Transcript: #339 Why IVF Is The Last Step to Address Infertility with Sarah Clark

Wendy Myers:

Hello. My name is Wendy Myers. Welcome to *The Myers Detox Podcast*. You can check me out at MyersDetox.com, where we have hundreds of articles and hundreds of podcasts about detoxification. On this podcast, we talk about everything related to heavy metal toxicity, chemicals and what these things do to our body. We discuss the health issues they cause, how to detox and these detox protocols.

Wendy Myers:

Today, we're going to be talking about toxins that cause infertility. We'll be talking about why IVF, or in vitro fertilization, is the last step to address infertility. We have our guest, Sarah Clark, on the show. This is such a good show because infertility is on the rise. Every one in five couples in the UK have issues with fertility, one in six in Canada and one in eight couples in the US. This is shocking. A lot of people are having trouble making babies and conceiving children. One of the main reasons is that toxins are interfering in our hormones, causing low hormone production. We're going to explore all that and more on the show today. We'll be talking about the truth about today's skyrocketing infertility rates. The top five things you need to do before considering IVF, and why it's the last step you should be thinking about. The top toxins that interfere in infertility or interfere in conception. The latest research on IVF safety and do's and don'ts of in vitro fertilization.

Wendy Myers:

I know you guys tuning in to this show are concerned about toxins and concerned about the levels of toxins that you have. I created a quiz called the heavy metals quiz. You can go check it out at HeavyMetalsQuiz.com. After taking that quiz, you will get your results. Based on your results, you get a free video series that tells you why you have these levels of toxins in your body and what is the next step, what you need to do to detox them from your body. Check out that totally free video series after you take the quiz at HeavyMetalsQuiz.com.

Wendy Myers: Today on the show we have Sarah Clark. When she was 28 years old, she received a diagnosis of premature ovarian failure. She accepted the diagnosis and had both her children through in vitro fertilization. Years later, she realized the root cause of her infertility was actually food sensitivity and a gut infection. She is a certified life coach with accreditation from The International Coaches Federation, and a health coach with training from The Institute for Integrative Nutrition. She's the author of *Fabulously Fertile: Supercharge Your Fertility Naturally*. Her fertility coaching program, which includes functional lab testing, supports couples to make diet and lifestyle changes that dramatically improve the chances of a healthy pregnancy and baby. On her *Get Pregnant Naturally* podcast, she shares that, with functional medicine and natural fertility solutions, we can eventually reduce infertility. You can check that out on iTunes and Spotify. You can learn more about Sarah Clark and her work with couples at FabFertile.com. Sarah, thank you so much for coming on the show.

Sarah Clark: Thanks for having me, Wendy.

Wendy Myers: Why don't you tell us your story and how you became a fertility coach.

Sarah Clark: I always joked I was having menopausal hot flashes in my early 20's. I remember being in HR at the time, fanning my face and kind of joking about that. It turns out that I was. I had irregular periods. By irregular, I mean I was getting my period a couple of times a year. I had this weird fungal rash on my chest. I had some yeast infections. Then, all of a sudden, I started getting acne in my early 20's. Before that I had great skin. I had those weird health issues going on, so the first line of defense was to go on the birth control pill. This was a band aid approach and really didn't do anything to address the underlying issues of what was going on. The acne didn't go away. Obviously, the cycles did regulate.

Sarah Clark: I had this life plan of getting married at 25 and then having my kids at 28, so I got married at 25. Then, at 28, I decided to go off the pill. When I went off the pill, my periods were still irregular. The acne was still there, and so was the yeast infections and the rash. I went to my OBGYN. I was told that I had premature ovarian failure, which is a loss of function of the ovaries before the age of 40. I was told the only way I'd ever have children was by using donor eggs. I remember her grabbing the IVF brochure and saying, "Off to the fertility clinic you go." I really was in shock. I had no idea those other health issues were connected to my infertility at the time.

Sarah Clark: I went to the fertility clinic and went on a list for a donor egg. We were lucky enough, on the first fresh transfer, to have our daughter. Our daughter just turned 18, so it was 18 years ago. When you say donor egg, people are like, "I don't even know what the heck that is". Now, you've got embryo donation and embryo adoption. Because of all the people going through IVF, there's all these embryos that are available. I had someone on my podcast who had a little embryo that was there for 13 years, and she just had her child. The child is two

years old, and the natural siblings are 13 years old. There are some cool science things going on.

Sarah Clark: I had my daughter and a year after that, I wanted to have my kids close together, so I went back. We had two embryos left over. Went back into the clinic and I was super stressed. I really wanted to have my kids close together, and those didn't work. We went on another list for another donor, and that one did work. We were lucky enough to have our son. He's 15, so they are three years apart.

Sarah Clark: After I had my daughter, my health really took a nosedive. I remember having nine colds in one year. Every cold turned into a sinus infection. I thought it was a great idea to take antibiotics for every cold. I had chronic yeast infections. I had chronic bladder infections. I became allergic to all the antibiotics. I was peeing blood. I had hives from the antibiotics. I had vertical toenail infections. My immune system was really compromised, although I was still functioning and still doing my thing.

Sarah Clark: I was still in HR at the time. I wanted to bring life coaching into the corporate environment. I took a coaching course and that's when I discovered I really wanted to get into health and wellness. I took a health coaching course and then that's where I discovered I had these food sensitivities. For me, at the time, I discovered I was intolerant to dairy and gluten. I took those out of my diet and, low and behold, the bladder, sinus and yeast infections started to disappear. A few years after that, I discovered I had gut infections with H. Pylori, Streptococcus and fungal infections. I also had that do, do, do and go, go, go kind of busy lifestyle. I was saying yes to everything instead of setting boundaries.

Sarah Clark: I didn't discover any of this until I was 40. I was fully in menopause. For me, it's important to get the message out. There's things we can do instead of going straight to the fertility clinic. I didn't even get a second opinion. I just said, "Okay. That's what it is". Now, looking back on all the things that were going on in my health, it didn't come to a reckoning until years later. We're helping people now, instead of years later, having to deal with a health issue.

Wendy Myers: I think that it is so important when you have a medical doctor telling you something that's really very serious, or life changing, or you need this surgery or you can't have children anymore. I would never take that at face value. I would always go get a second opinion. Why? Find out why, what's the underlying root cause? What's going on here? Dr. Google, help me. You know, I would not take that at face value. I think so many people are prone to completely trusting our medical professionals and just taking their word at face value. That's the last word. That is just one person's opinion. Everyone, every single person, has a limited knowledge set. You can't assume they know everything about fertility or what have you, just their chosen profession.

Sarah Clark: Yes, absolutely, it's interesting. Why didn't I get a second opinion? Going back, there were those chat forums that I went on. For POF, it's basically just making

sure you don't get osteoporosis or heart disease. You're going on HRT. I went on the pill for 10 years, and then HRT. I just followed this very medical way of doing it. With POF it's like, "Sorry you have POF. There's a 5% chance that you'll ever have your own children". It's game over, donor eggs for you. I actually thought I was one of the fortunate ones. I went through IVF but I didn't have to go through trying to get my eggs to work and years of failed cycles. I thought I had it easier. Now, with donor eggs, there's only a 50% chance of it working. Luckily, I was one of the fortunate ones. I see a lot of people going the donor egg road and it's still not working.

Wendy Myers: Infertility is a growing problem. Can you give us some statistics on the numbers or percentages of people and couples having fertility issues? The stuff that I've read is really frightening.

Sarah Clark: Yes, so it's one in six in Canada that are struggling with infertility, one in eight in the US, one in five in the UK. Before, 60%, 40%, 60% was the female factor for infertility and 40% was the male infertility factor. Now, it's showing studies more like 50/50. A lot of times, when people that come to me, it's women that are dealing with infertility. They're the ones making all the changes, doing all these things and the male partner may not even know what they can do to improve their health.

Sarah Clark: For IVF, it takes an average of three cycles and a cost of \$60,000 for IVF. Usually, you go to the fertility clinic. First you go to your OBGYN, like me, and then you're referred to the fertility clinic. Then off you go down that road of IUIs and IVFs. People come to me afterwards, after they've had all the failed cycles and it hasn't worked. That's a huge investment of \$60,000 and three cycles for it to work, when, wait a minute, there's other things we can do to maximize your chances. Basically the fertility clinics are there, but to me it's the last step. Why do we feel that's the first step?

Wendy Myers: Let's talk a little bit about what is causing all of the fertility issues that people are experiencing today.

Sarah Clark: My take on that is that we're in the middle of a food experiment. Our food is sprayed with glyphosate, which is a herbicide linked to infertility and a whole host of other diseases. That's a toxin that we're all eating. What you place on your fork every day does matter. Then, also, you have our busy, strict lifestyles. Most people that I coach are busy professionals. I was listening to a podcast with Dr. Christiane Northrup, and she was saying the higher up the degrees you have, Masters, PHD, the more likely that you could struggle with infertility, You're just this go-getter, type A. A lot of people that come to me say, "I've done everything. Everything in my life has always worked because I'm an achiever and a go-getter". Now, you're throwing everything into this and it's not.

Wendy Myers: Well, isn't that a protective mechanism? When you're stressed, the body will prevent egg release because it's feeling there's all this stress. That may not be a safe environment for a woman to be pregnant in. A million years ago, it was

survival. If the tribe was under stress and if a woman was pregnant, it could kill her. If they were moving a lot or whatever their stress was. It's a protective mechanism.

Sarah Clark: Yes, the body wants to survive. It doesn't want to procreate, and we're just pushing and pushing it. Obviously, looking at functional testing within the mental and emotional side of that is equally as important.

Wendy Myers: Any other contributors to our epidemic of infertility?

Sarah Clark: It's interesting. I interviewed Dr. Ben Lynch. He was talking about IV genetics and about infertility being passed on. You've got a diagnosis of infertility, and then you go to the fertility clinic because you haven't gotten to the underlying reason why. That potentially is being passed on to your children. I thought that was just really scary. It's interesting about the clinics. Back in 1985, there were 40 fertility clinics in the US. In 2015, there were 500. This is big business, like a multi billion, trillion dollar business with big pharma in there. Nine hundred million dollars a year is spent on pharmaceuticals. You see little things on Instagram. A little baby with all the needles, and a heart around the baby. All the medication that it took to conceive that little child.

Sarah Clark: To me, the fertility clinics are there to help you. They were designed initially for people that were having issues with their tubes, tubal disease. Now we've got people going in there with unexplained issues and PCOS, all these different diagnoses. We don't look at the diagnosis. We look at the whole body. It's like, you've got this diagnosis, here's your label. That's what it is and off you go. Meanwhile, the "why" and all these other things are off the table. We regularly see dysregulated thyroid, food sensitivities, gut infections, hormonal imbalance, blood sugar imbalance and a whole host of things as reasons why. Especially for the unexplained, they are people coming in with undiagnosed autoimmune disease, so it's not really unexplained.

Wendy Myers: You're not going to get information like this at your typical medical doctor's office. That's why we're doing what we're doing. To give people answers that they're seeking when they're trying to conceive and it's not working out. When is the right time to do IVF, to do in vitro fertilization? What kind of things do people need to try first before they go that route?

Sarah Clark: This is very personal. Obviously, if you're listening to this podcast, you're open to more of a functional side of things and looking at things more naturally. I would say, if you're newly diagnosed, to go organic. If that's too cost prohibitive, at least the dirty dozen, and making sure that you're not eating those foods that are the most highly sprayed. Looking at the toxins. Looking at your water. You want to make sure you're drinking enough water, but you want to make sure that water is filtered. At a minimum, a Brita, which is not even the best. If you can afford a Berkey, great. Making sure it's filtered and you're not drinking the water out of a plastic water bottle, because the plastics can leech into that and impact both male and female fertility. Water is essential for the cervical mucus,

for the sperm to get to the egg, so you want to make sure that you're hydrated. Eating organic food and looking at water is important.

Sarah Clark: Also, at the very beginning, consider an elimination diet. We have people start off by taking out the top allergens which are dairy, gluten, soy, corn, peanuts, and eggs. Take those out for 10 days and then systematically reintroduce them back in. We recommend that for both partners. That's if you're just diagnosed. Now, if you've been through multiple failed IUIs or IVFs and it hasn't worked, we're going to say, "Okay, let's do the elimination diet". When you hear all the stuff, it can be too overwhelming. We would have you start with a mindset. I work with people that don't have insurance for five or six rounds of IVF. They keep going, and going, and going and it doesn't work. The heartbreak and the stress associated with going through five or six cycles is immense.

Wendy Myers: It's traumatizing.

Sarah Clark: Absolutely, to deal with the trauma, to dig into the mindset, to really be able to slow down and focus on self care. Look at sleep and those foundational pieces, depending on where you are. If you've had one failed IVF or one failed IUI, then potentially you could be ready to do some functional testing. We do that as well as the elimination diet. Then, start making those foundational diet and lifestyle changes.

Wendy Myers: What role do gut infections play in suppressing one's ability to conceive?

Sarah Clark: We do see this. I'd say the majority of people that we work with have something going on in the gut. We see H pylori being passed back and forth to couples, not even with any of those acid reflux symptoms. That was me, actually. I had H pylori but I had none of those standard symptoms. We see this a lot with couples passing it back and forth with saliva. We see parasites, multiple parasites. People with low Anti-Müllerian hormone being told "Donor eggs are for you, but your success, the quality of your eggs is horrible. Sorry, the quantity of your eggs is very low and you won't be able to conceive". We see people with multiple parasites, bacterial infections and fungal infections. You clear that up, and then they can get pregnant naturally. The gut is huge, so we always do the GI map test to look to see what's going on in the gut and then develop a low and slow protocol, to allow the gut to heal.

Wendy Myers: It makes sense, because the natural killer T cells have to be low in order for a fetus to grow. If you have all these infections, you have a high natural killer T cell count, having the immune systems on overdrive dealing with all the infections. Your body is considering you under too much stress to conceive.

Sarah Clark: I had a friend who had nine years of infertility, and she had high natural killer cells, and went on an AIP diet. Years later, she tried to figure this whole thing out. She went through a number of IVFs that all failed. Then, she went on the AIP diet and was able to get pregnant naturally.

Wendy Myers: Fantastic. It's not just women that are at fault here. It's not just that our bodies are failing us, sometimes the infertility is due to men, also. We had a great podcast with Dr. Iva Keene talking about sperm, sperm quality and how to improve sperm quality. Your mate has a role in this as well. What can be done for men?

Sarah Clark: We typically will deal with female factor infertility. Even if the man is like, "My sperm is fine", there's always things we can do to improve his preconception health. We do a blood chemistry review. It's not to diagnose, it's to educate, to see what has been missed on his blood chemistry. Are there any thyroid issues that have been missed? Again, we see those infections being passed back and forth with partners, so that's something to look at. Then, if the sperm is fine, everything is good for him.

Sarah Clark: In the beginning, I was just coaching women, and found that I was missing the other link. This is a couple that's having a baby, so I have the two of them together. Sometimes they haven't even talked about some of the things that we're talking about. It's just sort of giving voice to some of these emotions. A lot of times the male partner feels he has to be strong, or that he can't really show how he's feeling. He's equally hurting. He wants to have his child and expand his family. To have the two of them together can be really helpful for that mental and emotional side of things.

Sarah Clark: For sperm, it's looking at EMFs, not to have the cellphone in the pocket, to minimize plastics and look at the elimination diet. We have both partners do the elimination diet. Again, most people that come to us say they don't have a food sensitivity, but I'd say almost everyone that comes to us has a food sensitivity.

Wendy Myers: People don't realize it. At least for men, their sperm regenerates every 72 days.

Sarah Clark: That's right.

Wendy Myers: If they just clean up their act for 72 days, they've got some brand new sperm that's good to go. No drinking, smoking, partying or fast food for 72 days.

Sarah Clark: Yes, exactly.

Wendy Myers: Let's talk about toxins. I feel like toxins are playing a massive role in interfering with people's hormones, interfering in just all the different metabolic processes that happen that lead to conception. Why is it important to look at toxins and eliminate them prior to conceiving?

Sarah Clark: These are the stressors. The stressors we have are either food sensitivity, a gut infection, environmental toxins, mental and emotional stress or structural stress, so the environmental side of things. There's lots of studies linking them back to endocrine issues and linked to infertility. Look at plastics, making sure you switch over to a glass water bottle or a stainless steel water bottle. First of all, it's not

the best idea to microwave but if you are microwaving, do not microwave in plastic, use glass.

Sarah Clark: Looking at your personal care products. Go to the *Skin Deep Database* and look up your current personal care products. It's not about freaking out and throwing everything in the garbage. As each thing gets finished, you will then switch to a more non-toxic option, which is really key for fertility. You're slathering on all these lotions and potions on your body, which is then impacting your endocrine system, for both males and females. We have people switch those out. There is a tendency for people to get a little bit overwrought about that, because it's like "Wait, I've got to throw it all out". That is a stress in itself, so doing that gradually is key. The same goes for the cleaning products. Make sure you're swapping out your cleaning products when they run out.

Sarah Clark: Look at feminine hygiene. A lot of times, in your most delicate area, your vagina, you are placing tampons or pads that have been sprayed with glyphosate which is linked to infertility. Switch out to a Diva Cup, or an organic pad or tampon. A reusable one is a good option too. That's one thing that most people haven't done, the feminine hygiene, when I speak to them. They may have done some of the personal care or the cleaning chemicals. With the feminine hygiene they're like, "Oh my goodness. I haven't done that".

Wendy Myers: You know, if it's not organic cotton, you mentioned it's sprayed with glyphosate. It's also dyed or bleached, so it's going to have dioxins. There's just so many different pesticides that can also be used on non-organic cotton. You don't want any of that, anywhere near your vajayjay.

Sarah Clark: No.

Wendy Myers: Personal lubricants are toxic as well, a lot of times. Petroleum based ingredients, fragrances, douches and other kinds of things like RepHresh. That's full of parabens which are hormone disruptors. A lot of women will use RepHresh PH balance stuff to try to balance out their vaginal flora. That has parabens in it which are, like I said, endocrine disruptors. There are a lot of different things you have to evaluate. Everything that's going on, or in your body, you have to look at that. You have to be a label detective and figure out if that's right for you or not.

Wendy Myers: Cadmium also plays a huge role in infertility because cadmium will increase the number of natural killer T cells. Cadmium is a very, very toxic metal. It's more toxic than all of the other heavy metals combined, so it's really a good thing for people to identify if they have cadmium. Especially if they've had recurrent miscarriages. Cadmium could play a role in that.

Wendy Myers: Let's talk about IVF. If someone's doing all of these things; the food sensitivities, some testing, cleaning up their diet and water intake, at what point if they're still not successful, should they consider IVF?

Sarah Clark: It takes 90 days for the egg to renew itself. The life cycle of the sperm, as you said, is 70 to 80 days. Really, in a short period of time, you can make major changes to your health. A minimum of three months. We say six months, because basically you've got to be able to give yourself time to make some of these changes. We use functional lab testing, food sensitivity, hormone, stool, hair tissue and urinalysis to then develop a customized protocol.

Sarah Clark: Because IVF is developed for people with tubal issues, I think the problem is that most people come to me if they're 28 or 38. Everyone is past the point when they want to expand their family. Fighting them off from going to IVF is a little bit of an issue because people are like, "Oh my goodness. The clock is running out of time. I need to do this now. I can't take six months. It's too much". We're explaining that it's important for your health, for a healthy pregnancy and also for your children, for your postpartum house.

Sarah Clark: For me, I didn't fix any of this stuff. I didn't discover it until I was 40, like I was talking about, so both my kids have food sensitivities. My postpartum health, I didn't really think I had an issue with. Looking back now, I've since heard about postpartum rage. Mine was not crying. I was just freaking ticked off, just cranky and irritable so I didn't have the smoothest postpartum period.

Sarah Clark: Rushing towards the fertility clinic, I totally get it if you're in your early 40's. But, wait a minimum of six months. Work on whatever's happening in there be it, food sensitivities, gut infections, environmental toxins, mental and emotional stress. Work on that, and then if you're not getting pregnant naturally, then you can go off. You'll either get pregnant naturally or increase your chances of success at the clinic. The clinic only has an average success rate for IVF of 30%. An IUI is 10%. Donor eggs are 50%. It's an extremely expensive option.

Sarah Clark: We still don't really know the impact of those drugs on the woman and on the children. There's studies talking about that. Some of the studies around women that have gone through IVF, are on if their children are at a higher risk of some cancers. Are women themselves at a higher risk of some cancers? I can kind of talk a little bit about those studies, if you like.

Wendy Myers: Yes, why don't we talk about that.

Sarah Clark: There's the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. Women who undergo IVF, have a slightly higher risk of developing severe complications than women who become pregnant naturally. Women with IVF have an increased risk of ovarian hyperstimulation or preterm delivery and preeclampsia associated with cardiovascular disease, later in life. Then there were some small studies in the 1990's and mid 2000's suggesting that women who underwent IVF might be more likely than the general population to be diagnosed with ovarian cancer, breast cancer and uterine cancer. Larger studies investigating this issue don't show the same link. There's one from Denmark, published in 2009, that looked at more than 50,000 Danish women who took fertility drugs. It found no

increased risk of ovarian cancer. Another one, published in 2011, looked at over 24,000 Swedish women, and found that IVF actually decreased the chances of those three common cancers. There are conflicting studies there. To me, it's all preliminary. We don't really know the impact of putting all these drugs into your body.

Sarah Clark:

For children, *The American Journal of Human Genetics* found that babies born to moms using IVF with fertility drugs had higher instances of retinoblastoma and neuroblastoma cancers. Also, this is what I saw, personally. *The Journal of American College of Cardiology* found that children born to women with IVF had a higher instance of food sensitivities, which I also saw. Both my kids have food sensitivities and allergies. Yes, both. My daughter had ear infections, tubes in her ears and eczema. Yes, I can see that personally, from going through that. I had a friend who actually works with children with autism. She sees a higher percentage of women that have gone through IVF with children who have autism. Now, not to panic anyone, but I think people say that it's not doing anything and I don't know.

Wendy Myers:

I think it makes so much sense, what you said about if you're going to get pregnant. If you're going to carry a birth to term, you need to be tending to these things anyways. Tending to toxins, food sensitivities in your diet and cleaning up your environment where you're growing the child. You're just opening yourself up for more pregnancy complications or problems with the child, transferring your toxins to the child. You've got to really think about detoxification and cleaning up your diet, because it's not about you anymore and your personal habits. You've got to tend to this stuff for your child.

Sarah Clark:

Absolutely, I think it's like your body is whispering to you. Right now, if you're dealing with infertility, it's shouting "Wait, wait, wait. What's going on? Rushing over here in a panic. Why don't we just take in the grand scheme of things to have a healthy pregnancy, a healthy postpartum and healthy children". Six months is really nothing to ensure that. For someone that's trying to keep teenagers dairy and gluten free, it's a nightmare.

Wendy Myers:

I noticed that too, with gluten, whenever I consume it I start having bladder issues. Also, I've noticed recurrent bladder infections. I finally just had to kick it altogether, 100%, no cheating. My mother has the same thing, recurrent bladder infections. She kicked gluten and it's totally gone. You mentioned that also, a lot of people have these food sensitivities and really aren't paying attention to that. They just think that something's wrong with them. They get an infection and take antibiotics. It kills our immune system, and then it's just this domino effect that affects, eventually, their ability to conceive.

Sarah Clark:

For me, with the bladder side of things, it came to the point where I was allergic to so many different antibiotics that I was peeing blood. I didn't even know what to do anymore. Then I discovered the food thing. I was thankful because I probably would've gone down some sort of surgery route. Who knows what they would have done. It's kind of interesting. To me, you assemble that team,

right? It's not excluding conventional medicine, but if you're dealing with infertility; you have your RE, you have your OBGYN, you have your fertility coach, you have your nutritionist, your masseuse, your chiropractor and your acupuncturist. Really, you're in the center. You're the connector of that healing table. Each person plays their role, and you can take each bit of information, but you know your body best.

Wendy Myers:

Exactly, because many practitioners aren't spending enough time with you. Say a medical doctor might be spending 10 or 15 minutes, maybe. You're not going to get a lot of sound information out of that, so you have to be very, very careful and research everything yourself. You cannot 100% leave your health in the hands of other people. You've got to take responsibility yourself and that's why we do this show, do this podcast. You talked about some of the statistics on IVF failure. Can you talk about some do's and don'ts for in vitro fertilization? If they do finally decide they need to go that route, after they've tried all the natural stuff and it's not working. Are there any do's and don'ts you can talk to us about?

Sarah Clark:

Maybe you're listening to this and you're like, I just want to go to IVF. I don't want to do any of the other functional side of things. If you're just planning to go to IVF, obviously there's a huge expense to that. You want to ensure that you increase your chances of success. At a minimum, I would say look at the mental and emotional side of things. We run a mindfulness fertility series a couple times a year. Really look at adding in meditation or journaling and mindfulness. Just in your daily routine, such as mindful hand washing or mindful walking or mindful showering. Be able to slow down. Be able to set boundaries, saying no. Alice Domar, she's a pioneer of mind- body fertility and a Harvard researcher who did studies on this. I've been doing this for more than 20 years and found that people in a mind-body fertility group, 55% of them went on to become mothers within six months. Then, 95% became pregnant within two years, or became a mother somehow within two years. The mindset piece alone is huge, just shifting your perspective.

Sarah Clark:

I just did an episode on my podcast, talking about triggers during the holiday season. The simple question that we get asked. "Do you have kids"? Just small talk, even well meaning, sends someone that's dealing with infertility down a complete spiral of not knowing what to say. Then, either spitting it all out, or spitting nothing out and then just worrying about it. It's a huge trigger for that. Also, during the holiday season, spending time with family and friends and people that have children, can be really, really painful. Getting support around that is important. The fact that the mind-body group, really having other women that are going through this journey, can shine some compassion on them which then helps to put it back on yourself. A lot of times it can feel very isolating that you're in this by yourself.

Sarah Clark:

When I was going through this, when I said "Donor egg", people don't even know what you're saying. I didn't have anyone. I had my husband, but I didn't have anyone that really understood. Now, getting a support group is really key as

you go through that. If that is where you're going, IVF. There's visualization exercises you can do. *Circle and Bloom* has some really good ones for an IUI procedure or an IVF procedure. You can listen to it, and it takes you through every step of the procedure. Then you can visualize your eggs and your womb, all of that, each piece. Just sort of visualizing it in your body helps to calm you down.

Wendy Myers: Let's also talk about the drugs that are administered with IVF. Can you just run through that and what happens? How you feel when you take those drugs, and the impact, the emotional toll, things like that?

Sarah Clark: Most people that I'm dealing with, I'm seeing them beforehand, as far as if they are going through IVF. People would have lots of different reactions, right? I have people that become very stressed because of that, if there's a hyperstimulation, which is no joke. You need to get medical help for that right away. Each person is going to respond to those drugs differently. Depending on what's going on with their health, if they haven't addressed gut infections, food sensitivities or thyroid issues, they may have different reactions to them. That will be very individual.

Sarah Clark: For myself, when I was going through it, I didn't really have any major issues. I was very naïve when I was going through this. I just thought it was going to work and it did work. I think now we can be more informed. There's women that help people specifically going through IVF, each step of the way, and are knowledgeable about the medication and the drugs for IVF. That's not my area of expertise. I'm helping people avoid IVF. If that's the way you want to go, then you can. You have to do what feels right for you.

Wendy Myers: People can get very emotional, too. Emotional, crying and fighting with their spouse.

Sarah Clark: Absolutely, yes.

Wendy Myers: It's not all rainbows and roses.

Sarah Clark: Absolutely.

Wendy Myers: Is there anything else that you want to contribute to this conversation or a message that you want to give to women that are having trouble conceiving?

Sarah Clark: I think if you're dealing with infertility, don't get hyper focused on that diagnosis, see what else is going on in your body. What has been missed? If it's low AMH, premature ovarian failure like myself, premature ovarian insufficiency, unexplained infertility, PCOS or endometriosis don't get stuck on that diagnosis. Look at the whole body. Is there a food sensitivity? People don't normally like that piece. Consider the food sensitivity, because making some of these foundational changes are a lot less expensive than spending \$60K on IVF. Look at doing the elimination diet with you and your partner. Typically, we recommend

at a minimum that you and your partner go dairy and gluten free for at least 90 days. If you're not pregnant, then dig into testing. Look at gut testing, hormone testing and hair testing. Dig into that piece and see what's being missed.

Sarah Clark: If the functional side does not feel right for you, it probably won't work, because you have to do the work. You need to be able to make those diet changes and those lifestyle changes. If you're like, "I just don't feel it", it probably won't work.

Wendy Myers: To really overcome a serious health challenge, it takes a lot of work and involvement on the patient's part or the client's part. It takes a lot of work. People have to want it really badly. They have to be motivated and want to make these changes. Some of us really take to that. We love it. We love eating healthy and feeling great as a result of eating healthy. Little detectives trying to figure out our bodies and what's going on, and figure out how it works. It's super fun. Other people are just not interested in that, or feel like they don't have the time. It's all about personal choice. Sarah, tell us where we can find you and what kind of help and programs you offer, helping women to conceive.

Sarah Clark: You can find me on the *Get Pregnant Naturally Podcast*. It's on iTunes and Spotify. We speak with people in the functional medicine community, doctors, about natural fertility solutions, and mind-body fertility. Definitely check out that podcast. Also, we have a couples coaching program that helps couples conceive. Making those foundational diet and lifestyle changes using the tools of functional lab testing. Really getting to the root cause of why it is not working.

Wendy Myers: Well, Sarah, thanks so much for coming on the show. I love that you're providing these resources for women and couples, because this is a growing issue. It's one of the reasons that I do what I do. It's just a terrible thing to deal with. When you finally get married and you have this dream of having a child, you're ready and then it's just not happening. People blame themselves. They get upset. It's really devastating, and toxins play a huge role in interfering in conception. Thank you so much for the work that you're doing.

Sarah Clark: Thanks for having me, Wendy.

Wendy Myers: Everyone, thanks for tuning in to the *Myers Detox Podcast*, where every week we explore topics related to detox, detox supplements, protocols and how toxins are impacting your health and your life. Thanks for tuning in. I'll talk to you guys next week. You can check me out at MyersDetox.com, where we have hundreds of podcasts and hundreds of articles, tons of free resources for you to learn more about how to detox your body. Thanks for tuning in.