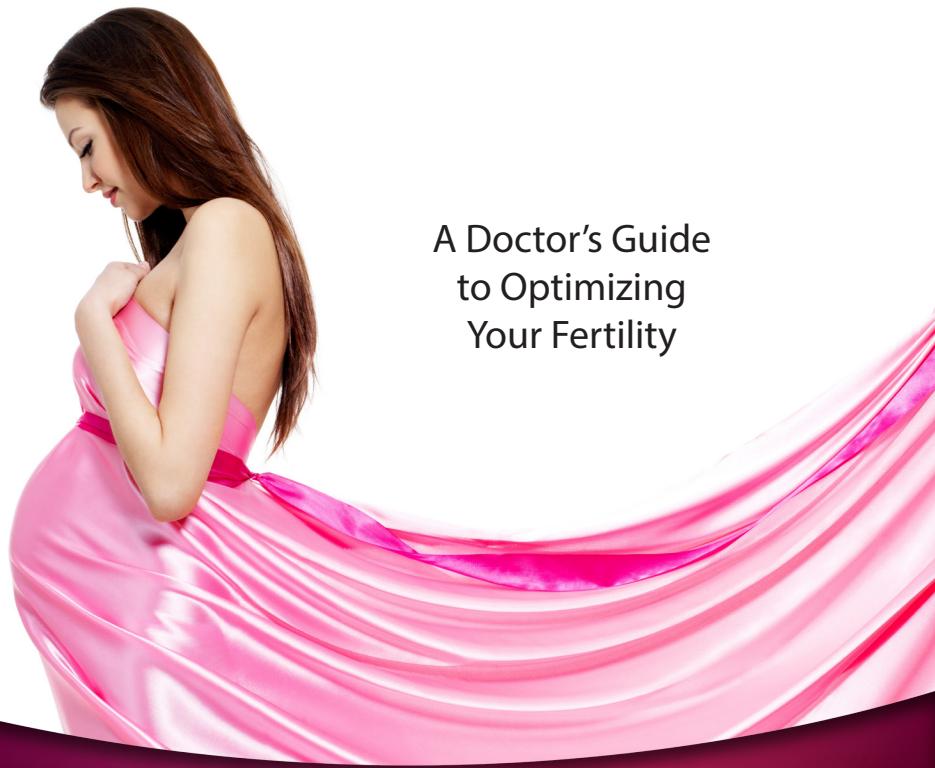


# Expecting Fertility



A Doctor's Guide  
to Optimizing  
Your Fertility

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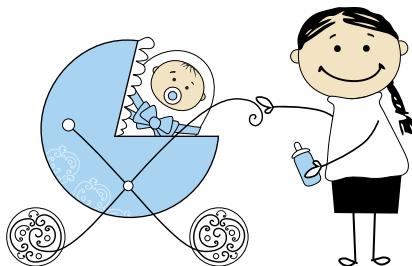
By Dr. Zachary Watkins



[www.DrZacWatkins.com](http://www.DrZacWatkins.com)

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# ACHIEVE OPTIMAL FERTILITY IN 24 MONTHS OR LESS

This effective and simple-to-implement program helps women to optimize their health in 24 months or less to support a healthy pregnancy and it involves no medications or prescriptions!

If you are reading this ebook, then you are a woman who is highly motivated to learn about ways to optimize your health for fertility. You may be a woman preparing for future pregnancy (pre-conception care) and want to have the healthiest outcome possible, or a woman who has worked with infertility specialists because of difficulties and may have been told “there is nothing else to be done”.

Look, you've been reading and researching and you know that there is so much information out there concerning your health and fertility, that you don't know who or what to trust anymore. I mean, you can't do everything right? You hear news about certain vitamins to take to “optimize fertility”, you may have been told that your diet does not matter but you KNOW that it has too, or you may have brought up these concerns with your provider and told that there isn't even such a thing as “optimizing your health for fertility”. You've seen blogs, posts, tweets, other ebooks, practitioners' opinions, and even taken the advice from family. All this to say that what is needed is a plan; a plan that is easy to follow, and has been shown to work with many women. A plan that will enable you to positively **expect fertility**.

The good news is that there are many other options available to support your health and optimize your fertility options. There is a proper foundation that you need to build your health upon in order to achieve and promote healthy fertility.

My goal for women is for them to know that their health TODAY, affects the health of their baby. Most women don't realize that. Research has shown that environmental toxins exposed to a woman (and man) can be passed to their offspring through conception. Other research has even shown that the health of generations past can have an effect on our babies tomorrow.



You could achieve optimal health for fertility and you could learn key things that are commonly overlooked. Doing this will not only effect the health of your baby and their future (such as preventing early onset of disease), but help you to look and feel your best post-pregnancy! This can be done through a simple, 3-step program that is lead by someone who you can trust to give the direction you need to make the best decisions for your health and optimize your fertility.

My hope is to help women understand that there are 3 foundational areas of health that are a must when it comes to future pregnancy. The plan is simple, yet takes commitment and a "broader picture" mentality.

## NEW HOPE WHEN ALL HOPE IS GONE

My patients are given new hope about their fertility options when they felt all hope was gone (see video at [DrZacWatkins.com/infertility](http://DrZacWatkins.com/infertility)). I've helped women understand that there are 3 main body systems that are foundational to their health. They work so intricately together and if one or all are not working correctly, it may impact their health, their fertility, and even the health of their baby.



I have also showed women some of the most common ways to eat that supports and helps correct these foundational systems. Yes, there are simple changes you can make in your diet and eating patterns that will support these body systems!

When women come to my office, they are looking for other options regarding their fertility health. Most of the time couples have been trying to get pregnant for many months, or they've experienced the heartache of miscarriage. I hear the stories of frustration, fatigue, and self-blame. But then I show them that their health and fertility is based more upon a whole-person approach to health and not just what their hormones are doing at this point in life.



## DETERMINING THE ROADBLOCKS TO FERTILITY

Most women, when given other options of hope through a program, believe they can't do what's required of them. They are overwhelmed. They've been everywhere (and even to multiple specialists), but have yet to find a system or plan that works for them that helps to prepare them for optimal fertility.

### You may be thinking...

"But we've been trying to get pregnant for awhile and I was told by my provider that there isn't anything else I can do..."

"I'm not sure where to start. How do I make the best decision now to help me in the future?"

"...There is too much information 'out there' regarding fertility as to what is healthy, what is not. What is helpful, what is not..."

"...But I can't change my diet, it's too hard..."



The biggest problem that I encounter in my practice is **a willingness to be committed to a set plan.**

These women, coming to me initially and not knowing anything about their health, end up learning more about what they can do to make themselves healthier and what they can do for their fertility when they've been told nothing else can be done. This is the functional medicine approach to infertility. Read more about this at [DrZacWatkins.com/infertility](http://DrZacWatkins.com/infertility).

These women are confidently able to go through those periods of confusion, or questioning if they are doing the right things, and even speaking with their fertility specialist.



## THESE WOMEN DIDN'T LET ROADBLOCKS GET IN THEIR WAY ...

*My husband and I had been trying to get pregnant for years. We went to the doctor and had lots of tests. I started seeing the fertility doctor here in town and he diagnosed me with polycystic ovaries. I underwent weeks of treatments, shots, and tests. We did get pregnant and had our first child.*

*A couple of years later we wanted a second child. I went through the treatment again but it didn't work. My hormones were worse than they were before, and my body was not responding to the drugs.*

*I contacted Dr. Zac and told him my situation and asked him if he could help me get my body back in line...help my body with fertility health. He had some ideas (none of which included injections in my leg, or filling my body with chemicals), and was going to help allow my body to get back on track and function like it was designed too.*

*He had a great way to explain what was happening with my body and my hormones. I was told that because of my diet, my reproductive tract was not functioning well. He changed my diet, recommended specific testing and supplementation, and helped my body to function better.*

*The way he explained things made me understand that my body is made to reset itself. I don't need chemicals and I don't need drugs.*

*After a couple of weeks, I was pregnant. The program made my body healthier and got it to be where it needed to conceive. We now have our second child, a healthy boy.*

*There are some women who want to go to the OBGYN or the fertility doctor. For some women a holistic doctor is not 'real' medicine and I had people tell me that he was just messing with my mind. But after talking with Dr. Zac and understanding exactly what he would be doing and why, I trusted him. I work in the medical field so I have an understanding of what was happening. He helped me link my food choices to the reasons that my body wasn't functioning the way that it should be.*



*I was a little bit reserved when I first started the program. "What if it doesn't work? Am I going to screw up my body completely?" But I trusted Dr. Zac. He was educated, knew what he was doing and explained everything. He had a way to reset my system that had worked for others and I knew it was the best choice for me.*

*The expectations he had of me were high including following his recommendations and plan...it wasn't difficult and I understand not everybody will have the same results.*

*Dr. Zac has a different approach to infertility... a different approach to medicine. Some women aren't ready to go down that road.*

*In the end, I had great results. Dr. Zac was KIND, he didn't rush me out the door. He listened to what was happening with me and with my body.*

*- Sara J.*

*I was ready for a fresh look at my infertility after losing all faith in other medical professionals that were satisfied that I was perfectly health.*

*After our first few meetings I felt hope that finally someone was really going to shine a light on my issues and give me guidance. After looking at my lab work and finding a handful of things that could use serious improvement, we got to work. He gave me suggestions on ways I needed to change my diet and started me on a supplement plan. It was a lot to adjust to at first but it was so worth it!*

*I now have a beautiful three year old and another little one on the way. I know that Dr. Zac gave me (my body) the boost I needed to have a healthy and successful first pregnancy and now a second. I am so grateful for his willingness to look deeper and to see me as a person and not just another patient.*

*- Ashley*

*After our third miscarriage, we were discouraged to say the least. Between the medicine, self-administered hormone shots, and almost daily doctor*



*visits, I was sick and tired as well.*

*We had been in the care of multiple doctors and specialists and none of them were concerned about the cause of the miscarriages. One doctor even said, "We just need to keep getting you pregnant and one of them will eventually stick."*

*Things were much different when we began working with Dr. Zac. Through different and specific testing, he recommended changes to my diet and a targeted supplement plan. I started feeling better within weeks, in a few months was pregnant, and then had a healthy baby boy!*

*Today, I feel better, am sleeping better and have more energy to keep up with that two and a half year old!*

- Michelle G.

## THE PATH THAT LED ME TO HELPING OTHERS

I've seen hundreds of patients struggle with various health issues ranging from irritable bowel disease to female hormone problems to fatigue. The cases have all been unique, and setting them on the path to better overall health has been immensely gratifying. However, the amount of joy that comes from setting a woman on a path to healthfully aligning her body and spirit for the experience of bringing life into the world has been by far the most rewarding part of my career. Spend a few minutes to watch this touching video at [DrZacWatkins.com/infertility](http://DrZacWatkins.com/infertility).

When I heard from women their frustrations and struggles with fertility, I wanted to find the best way I could help. Infertility pains seem to affect many people, even me and my family multiple times and in different generations.

Given the state of our society, the environment, and poor nutrition, it is getting more difficult from a biochemical and physiological standpoint to get and stay healthy. Hormones, natural foods, and environmental factors all play an intricate role in the path to a successful and healthy pregnancy. We need to work to OPTIMIZE our bodies to function well so that

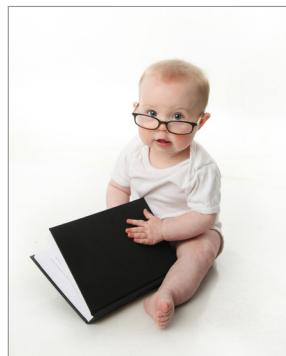


our children can be as healthy as possible. It is this understanding that drives me to find the best possible ways that I can help.

## WHY IS THIS WORKING SO WELL?

What I have learned has taken many years of experience, learning, and understanding how the body works.

What I learned when working with patients was that there were these underlying themes that were consistent with each person. When these specific areas were not working properly, there was a breakdown in other body systems in the body.



This 3-part method is applied with optimizing fertility because it is getting women healthier, feeling well, and regulating their hormones.

I found that if I 'took a short cut', or skipped some of these important areas I wouldn't get the results that they (or I) were looking for. And that was discouraging.

I have spent years learning from many experts in the functional medicine and nutrition fields. As of this writing, I'm finishing another graduate degree in that same topic, all to improve my knowledge to better serve my patients.

What better thing could I do for women and their future babies, than to help them be the healthiest they can be?

Of course I never could guarantee results with every single person. That would just be plain irresponsible. But what I will guarantee is that you will be on a path to optimal health and fertility which increases your chances of successful pregnancy many fold.



## COMMON FERTILITY MYTHS

- "There is no other option with regards to fertility," my doctor said so.
- Nutrition and vitamins can't help me, this is a serious medical issue.
- I can't eliminate certain foods from my diet... I just can't eat that way.
- What I eat isn't related to my fertility.
- I've had all the medical testing to show that there isn't anything else that can be done.
- The health of my partner/spouse does not effect me and my ability to get pregnant.

## 3 BODY SYSTEMS FOUNDATIONAL TO HEALTH AND FERTILITY

### PILLAR #1 – THE STRESS RESPONSE (HORMONE SYSTEM)

#### The Hormonal System

The #1 pillar that optimal fertility must be built on is the stress hormone response. Your body makes hormones called Cortisol and DHEA. They have a role in how our body responds to stress (mental/emotional, biochemical, inflammatory, etc.). This system has an important role because it has an impact in so many areas of your health, and evaluating how it is responding is one way to see if things are behaving appropriately. Just like a "check engine" light in your car tells you to get it into the shop for some maintenance, this cortisol and DHEA response can work as your "check engine" light and help you to gauge if things are working as they should.

#### The Role of the Stress Hormones

Cortisol, is a hormone derived from cholesterol (where our sex hormones come from as well). Our body's stress response is set up to help counteract any kind of stress that is placed on the body (good or bad). When these stressors occur, our body adjusts by increasing the output of cortisol and DHEA. This is a good thing as this is a normal response. The trouble lies when this stress response gets 'stuck' in the high-output phase. The high output signals to the brain that this high output is now your new normal rhythm (I will be explaining this further below).



You may feel good for a time because this extra output can actually give you a boost during these stress times. But, as time goes on and, like a small hole in a bucket, this output of cortisol slowly decreases and drops. Lower and lower it goes until your total output could actually be half or less of the normal output. Now we are talking about the point where symptoms can creep up, like fertility problems and libido. And, (this is KEY), all your stress hormone comes from progesterone. If your body is demanding more stress hormone, your progesterone storage is depleted. This is a very big problem with women today and women with infertility, miscarriages, abnormal cycles, and mood problems related to their cycles.

### **Causes and Symptoms of Stress**

Adrenal/cortisol stress is caused by lifestyle issues such as working long hours, poor eating habits, lack of exercise or rest. It also can be caused by internal organ dysfunction such as poor digestion, imbalanced blood sugar, chronic infections or inadequate detoxification ability. The largest contributor of these even includes mental and emotional stressors like those experiencing death of a loved one, divorce, or a traumatic past. When the sum total of all your stresses reaches a critical threshold, the adrenals react in a predictable and systematic pattern.



Some of the most common symptoms that someone would experience when this stress response is involved includes: fatigue, depression, inability to lose weight, sweet cravings, decreased sex drive, insomnia, poor memory, anxiety, PMS, weakened immune response, recurrent infections, unexplained nervousness or irritability and joint or muscle pain. As you experience these external symptoms, profound physiological changes are taking place inside your body.

There are multiple phases or stages that these stress hormones can be functioning in. This is very important because it will then tell us how it relates to your other hormones and if there is a problem. The good news is that something can be done!



## Some of the Important Roles of Cortisol and DHEA - Stress and Sex Hormone Production and Sex Drive

Because all steroid hormone production is linked by biochemical pathways, cortisol and DHEA depletion impacts the female hormones progesterone and estrogen, as well as the predominant male hormone, testosterone. In both men and women hormonal symptoms such as mood swings, irritability, sweet cravings and headaches can be related to the failure of the adrenals to adapt to stress. Female hormone symptoms such as menstrual cramping, infertility, night sweats and hot flashes can also be adrenal related. Many women feel they are on an emotional roller coaster with their female hormones, yet rarely is the role the adrenals play in female hormones explored, especially with fertility. This process is intricately woven into a women's hormone cascade, yet is usually dismissed. Since sex hormone levels drop as cortisol and DHEA levels drop, sex drive diminishes in both men and women.

## PILLAR #2 – THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

The foundation of good health lies in proper digestive function. All other health factors can be undermined if you don't digest and absorb nutrients well. Assimilation of vitamins, minerals, proteins and essential fatty acids from the foods you eat and the supplements you take is required for optimum health. Any therapeutic program you may use will be of limited value without good digestive function.



"So what does this have to do with my fertility?" When the stress hormones are out of balance, the long-term effects are that it suppresses the natural immunity lining the intestinal tract. Just like someone with an asthma attack uses inhaled steroids to calm the reaction down (quiets the immune system), an over-production of your own stress hormone (cortisol) can dampen the immune system in the GI tract.

This is not optimal as it allows for problems to arise. Bad bugs like bacteria, parasites, and fungus can inhabit the GI tract not allowing our good bacteria to grow and flourish. You may start to develop symptoms like



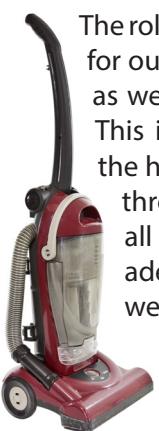
constipation, diarrhea, gas/bloating, and reactions to foods that you've never had before.

Because of this situation, a state of inflammation is set up in the body that continually drives the stress hormone response (it's a vicious circle). Long-term stress hormone burden = poorer GI function = infections and inflammation = more stress hormone burden.

So you can see that digestive inflammation (which is very, VERY common), burdens the stress hormone system, which then in turn takes a toll on progesterone.

### PILLAR #3 – THE DETOXIFICATION SYSTEM

The third major pillar is based on both anti-oxidant protection and liver detoxification. These body functions are the physiological mechanisms that protect you from free radical damage and chemical toxicity (like excess hormones). Inadequate detoxification leads to allergies, asthma, joint pain, skin problems, headaches, inability to concentrate, and alcohol intolerance. This is important, not only for optimal health, but achieving optimal fertility.



The role of the liver is important for optimal fertility. It acts like a filter for our body. Just like a vacuum bag that gets full and can't clean as well, our filter can be "full" and not filter our blood efficiently. This is especially important for women and fertility because of the hormones they **make** daily and the hormones they take daily through birth control pills, or in foods and plastics because all have to be eliminated by the filter. If the liver does not have adequate nutrients to detoxify, or if the GI tract isn't working well and eliminating, then women are at more risk for hormone imbalances. This changes how hormones work within the body and can make optimal health and fertility difficult (not to mention causing allergies, skin reactions, accelerated aging and promotes the onset of degenerative diseases).

These are the top three processes in our health that I have found that, if not working correctly, will prevent optimal health and even fertility. My hope is to help educate women on ways that they can improve the



way their body works so that they become empowered to make necessary changes.

You no doubt may have further questions, which is expected since I only have so much room in this short ebook! I invite you to post some comments to my Facebook page [www.facebook.com/livewellclinic](http://www.facebook.com/livewellclinic).

Also, if you are not sure if these 3 important areas are functioning optimally with you, or you have been struggling with fertility, please think about how I can be of service to you. Be sure to visit my website [www.DrZacWatkins.com](http://www.DrZacWatkins.com) and email us if we can be of any help.

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS THAT YOU CAN START USING TODAY

So, before I close I want you impart to you the 3 most important tips you can start using today!

**TIP #1** – When it comes to supporting the 1st pillar, one of the top stresses the hormone system deals with is blood sugar imbalance. The easiest way you can start balancing this system out is to EAT MORE PROTEIN. Especially in the morning for breakfast! No more “fruity puffs” and coffee. For the next week, work at getting more protein in for your breakfast. Make an omelette, some chicken sausage and veggies, or even a protein shake. This will start your day out optimally that will support blood sugar.

**TIP #2** – Eliminate gluten-containing foods for 1 week. Gluten is in things like breads, cakes, cookies, wheat products, etc. “What?! Are you serious?” Absolutely. This particular element that is in these products is very inflammatory to our GI system. It can promote GI discomfort like bloating, constipation, and fatigue. Instead, find foods that are more clean and less processed like lean proteins and veggies. See how



you feel after 1 week and report your progress on my Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/livewellclinic](http://www.facebook.com/livewellclinic). By the way, 1 week elimination is not even close to what is expected for a long-term program for optimal fertility. The examples I could give are numerous. Also, there are even published studies looking at the connection of gluten-sensitive individuals and fertility problems.

**TIP #3** – Get to sleep by 10 each night for the next week. Yes, no more late-night cheesy dating shows or Jimmy Fallon. Just try for 1 week. This has such a profound effect on the body's stress mechanism which is so important to correcting hormonal imbalances (stress hormones and even sex hormones).

These three simple tips are focused primarily on supporting the stress hormone response that is so crucial to optimal fertility. Yes, simple things like this can change everything! For those of you who can implement all three of these things over the next week, please report your findings on my Facebook page for all to read. I would like to see how others are responding and feeling just after a week (now I must preface...these simple things aren't a cure-all to health as there are many more things involved from a clinical aspect. But what if they DO make a difference? Try it).

## THE ONE THING YOU MUST DO NOW

Finally, the first thing I want you to do when finished reading is to think about the 5 top things off the top of your head that you know deep down you need to change regarding your health to achieve optimal fertility. What are the 5 things that you know you could change or do, that would impact your fertility health? Is it eating a cleaner diet? Not having so much coffee or alcohol? Starting a regular exercise program? Getting more sleep? Finding a practitioner willing to work with you through this time?

What are these for you? Be optimistic about your health. Change your mindset from "it's too hard", or "it's just the way I am", or even "I've been told there is nothing else I can do". If you can visualize the life you want to live/have in 24 months, what does that look like? In other words...EXPECT FERTILITY!



## THE TOP 5 THINGS IN MY LIFE THAT I CAN CHANGE TODAY THAT WOULD OPTIMIZE MY FERTILITY IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS ARE:

1).

2).

3).

4).

5).

If you think that there is some involvement and connection in YOUR health and fertility with regards to your stress hormones, take my online adrenal questionnaire/test to evaluate your body stress level. It can be found at [www.DrZacWatkins.com](http://www.DrZacWatkins.com).

Also on my website is my free ebook "EatWell to LiveWell". Download it to learn more about eating to balance your blood sugar to support healthy hormones.

I'm excited to see the great success you will have!

To your optimal fertility and health,

*Dr. Zachary Watkins*





DrZacWatkins.com/infertility



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