



# **Gut Health, Autoimmunity & Fertility Challenges:** Treating the modern fertility patient with ancient wisdom

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The modern fertility patient can be quite complicated.  
But never forget to treat what you see...



*Alison*

*41 when I first met her*

*TTC for 4 years, 2 IUI's, 6 IVF's, 3 Miscarriages, No genetically normal embryos left, Hashimoto's*

*What she did before working with me:*

*Fertility acupuncture, Chinese herbs, a TON of supplements, some diet shifts, autoimmune fertility specialist and lap*

*Western diagnosis:*

*Endometriosis, AMA & Poor quality eggs*



What I did with her... I treated what I saw. She had the following chronic symptoms (that never resolved with previous treatment):

bloating

constipation

bouts of hives/ a red raised rash all over her body a few days/wk

inability to lose weight

angry and depressed

painful joints

dull achey headaches

sinus congestion

very vivid dreams

fatigue

a regular period that was dark, clotty and a sludgy purplish-red color

painful menstrual cramps that were better with heat



What I did: weekly acupuncture, a 3-month gut healing elimination diet with her, removed 90% of her supplements, recommended regular castor oil packs, put her on Chinese herbs for her TCM diagnosis of blood stagnation, poor T&T, liver qi stagnation, heat above/cold below and gave her tools to unpack the anger/trauma shes experienced from her fertilit journey.  
I told her to wait to get pregnant until we saw her symptoms shift.

She followed this plan for 6 months and went back in for another IVF cycle at the age of 42, got 3 PGS normal embryos and now has two children from two successful transfers a a few years apart (she gave birth to her most recent child at the age of 46)



Her previous practitioners focused mainly on her age and the fact that she needed to make healthy eggs and gave her herbs and treatment focused on Jing/Essence and entirely missed treating the poor quality stagnant blood and the malnourishment she was experiencing due to poor gut health / poor spleen function.



We are taught that the most common reasons for fertility challenges:

Structural & anatomical blockages

PCOS

Endometriosis

Miscarriage

POI/POA/POF

Age



What we aren't taught (but the literature has caught onto this notion) is that autoimmune/inflammatory diseases are at the root of most female related fertility challenges:

Hashimotos

PCOS\*

Endometriosis\*

POA/ POI\*

Habitual Miscarriages

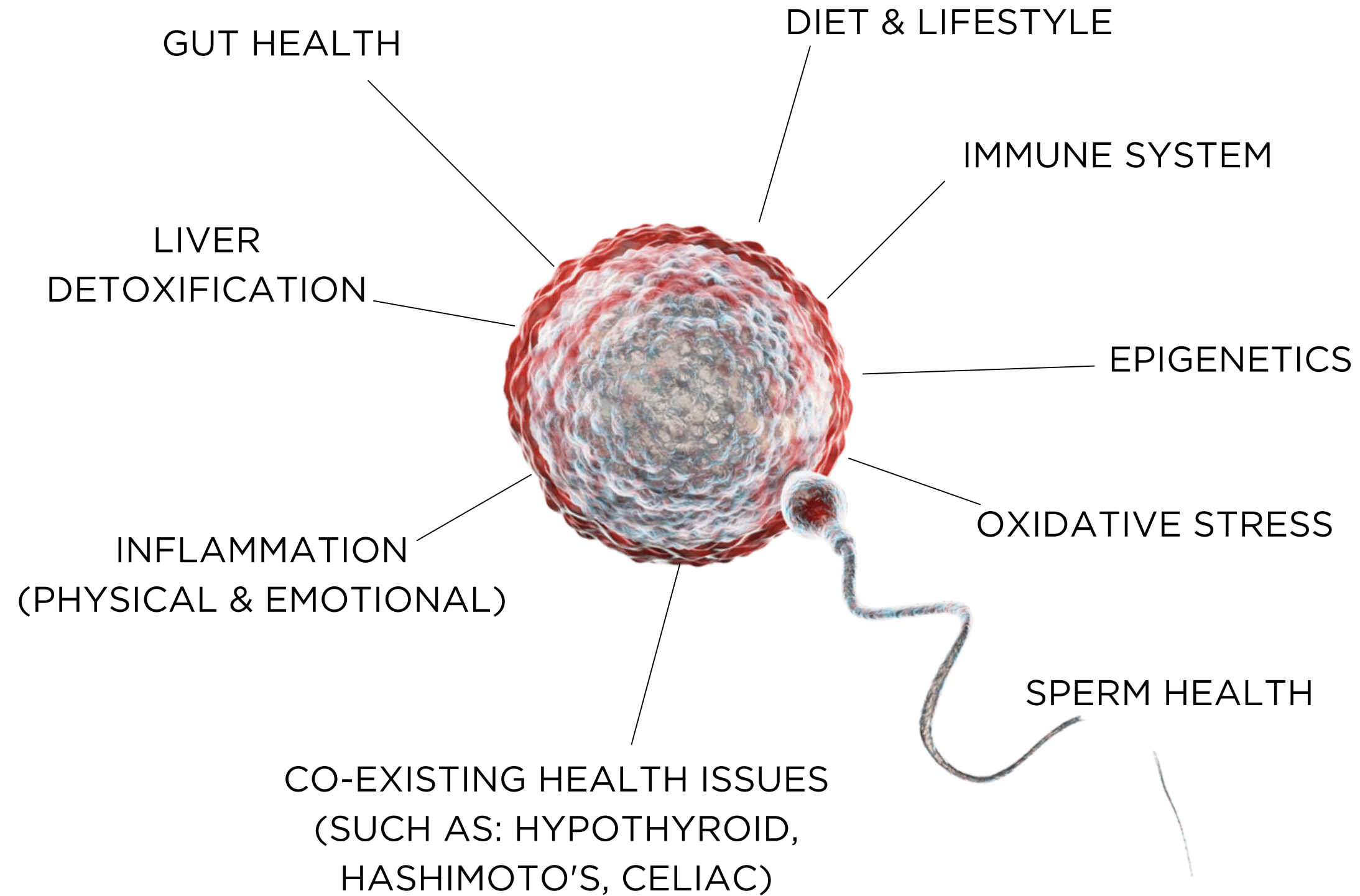
Celiac

*\*these are inflammatory conditions that have autoimmune characteristics*





# THE KEYS TO EGG QUALITY





*What we arent taught is that any fertility challenge is NOT a stand alone or spontaneous event, Fertility challenges are most often a result of a long standing chronic dis-ease state, stemming from:*

*Gut health issue/malabsorption  
Immmun system dysregulation  
Inflammation*



*70% of your immune system is in the tissues surrounding your gastrointestinal tract, since it regularly interacts with the external environment from the foods you eat, the beverages you drink and the chemicals you come into contact with.*

*Knowing this, when we are dealing with chronic illness we must start with healing the gut/improving T&T function. And we must never underestimate the role of what I like to call "emotional inflammation"*



Improving fertility is about reducing inflammation (emotional and physical), optimizing absorption of nutrition and the quality of cellular health. It is NOT about the quantity of eggs left (nor the women's age).



Treat what you see...not just fertility.  
Fertility thrives as an extension  
of overall health. We must focus on  
improving cellular health & pregnancy  
will happen as a side effect



If a woman isn't getting pregnant, it's a sign from her body that it doesn't have all it needs to thrive let alone make another human. We need to tune into that and ask, "Why? What are their symptoms telling me?"



**How do we know if inflammation/autoimmunity is at play? Look at the patient presentation, if you see any of the following symptoms suspect inflammation and/or autoimmunity:**

Anxiety/ Depression

Digestive issues (gas, bloat, constipation, diarrhea)

Skin issues (acne, eczema, psoriasis, rashes)

Frequent colds/sinus congestion/allergies

Brain Fog and/or Fatigue

Body aches

Recurrent miscarriage

TTC for 2+ years with no success and/or multiple failed ART's

A diagnosed autoimmune/inflammatory condition

*\*note: these are the most common ones to see*



How do we improve cellular quality?

**We have to manage autoimmunity & inflammation**

**We need to support the body coming back to homeostasis so it can be less hostile & more welcoming**

*(which from a TCM perspective will bring harmony to Qi, Blood & Essence)*





How do we manage autoimmunity & reduce inflammation?

**Nutrient dense, gut healing diet**

**Address coexisting conditions**

**Minimize toxins**

**Manage lifestyle**

**Restore peace**



If we don't start with reducing the inflammation, no nutrition/herbs or supplements can be absorbed.

Improved T&T function (aka heal the gut)==>

Micronutrient absorption ==>

A body that begins thriving rather than barely surviving



**Here's what happens as we age...**





## Advanced Maternal Age:

82% of women aged 35-39 having sex twice/week conceived naturally within one year of trying  
(compared to 86% of women aged 27-34)

78% of women aged 35-40 who had sex at their fertile times got pregnant within one year of trying  
(compared to 84% of 20-34 year olds)



FSH, AMH & AFC are not set in stone.  
They can improve.



Age is not the biggest factor.

Diet, lifestyle & managing inflammation/ autoimmunity all have the largest impact on fertility & the ability to conceive



## Chronological vs Physiological Age

*My approach to the aging egg discussion has always been based on the idea that if we can reverse heart disease or Type II diabetes or heal from cancer or any other disease, why on earth can't we recover our aging ovaries? It's really all the same thing. You see, we are made up of trillions of cells and science shows us that how we live our life-- the choices we make on a daily basis-- influences the overall state of inflammation and oxidation in our bodies. So by that train of thinking then what we do with our choices impact how those cells in our body-- including the ones in your ovaries-- decline or revitalize.*



*Researchers in 2020 concluded in that, “The ovarian microenvironment and the stress that is induced by environmental pollutants and a poor diet, along with other factors, impact oocyte quality and function and contribute to accelerated oocyte aging and diseases of infertility”. In other words, the scientific literature is showing that a diet high in antioxidants, protein and nutrient density improves egg quality and staves off ovarian aging.*

*Adv Exp Med Biol. 2020;1247:109-123. doi: 10.1007/5584\_2019\_456.*

*<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31802446/>*





*Even more, an article published in April of 2021 in the journal Aging found that following dietary recommendations (which I will break down for you) along with certain lifestyle modifications (like sleeping 7 hours/night, exercising 30 minutes 5 days/week, practicing breathing exercises 2x/day and taking high quality supplements) actually **REVERSED AGING** by 3 years in only 8 weeks time.*

<https://doi.org/10.18632/aging.202913>



## The Aging Study Diet Recommendations:

Organic, grass fed liver (3, 3 oz servings/week)

5-10 pastured eggs/week

Grass fed meat (6 oz daily)

8 servings of veg daily (cruciferous, leafy greens, beets & colorful)

1/2 cup of seeds

2 servings of low glycemic fruit

**Avoid** added sugar/candy, dairy, grains, legumes/beans

**Minimize** plastic food containers



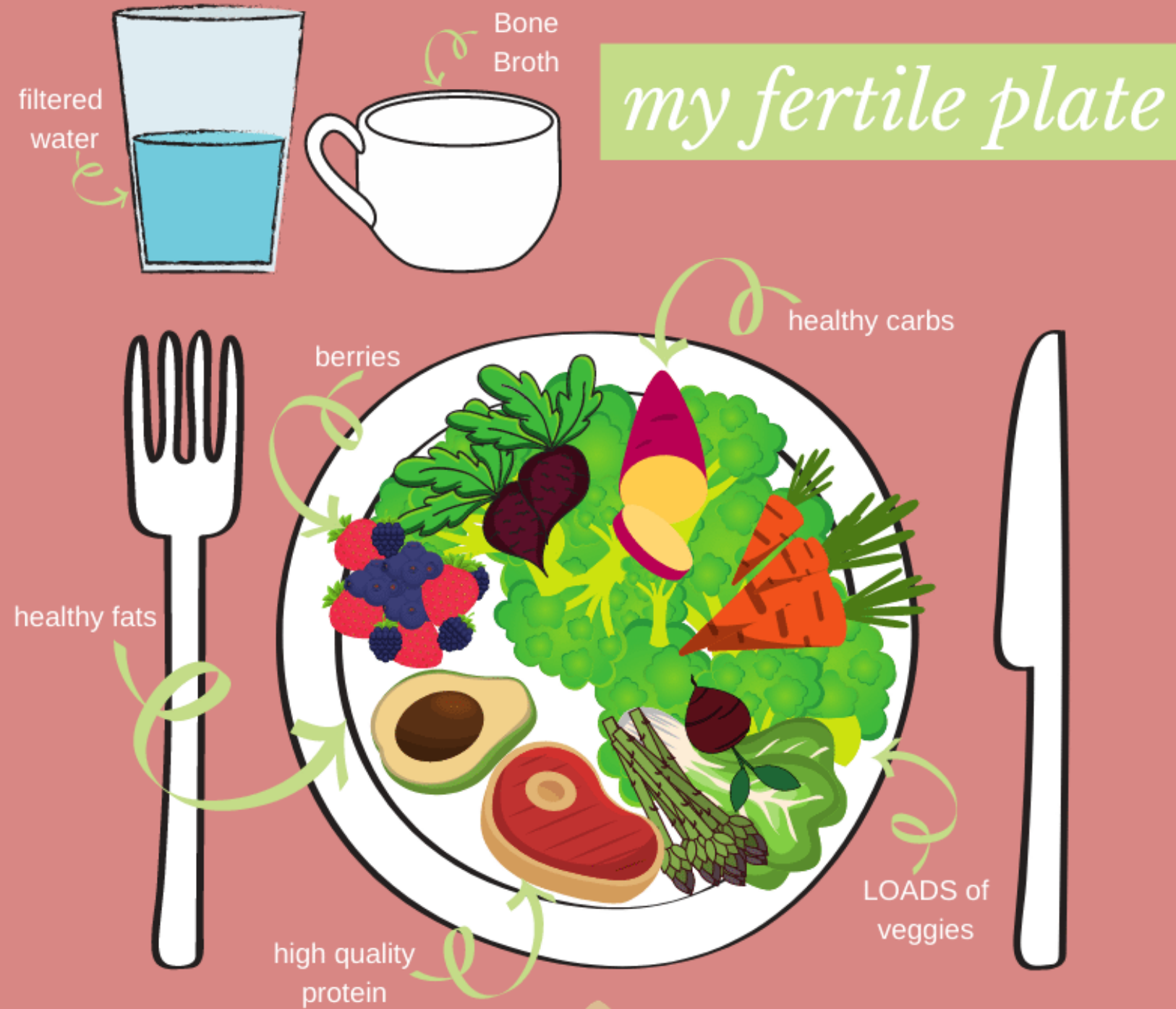
## *Ideal diet for fertility*

Autoimmune Paleo (AIP) mixed with  
Ancestral Chinese Medicine diet (organ meats, bone  
broths, congees, warm cooked colorful foods)



# Why?

Because this style of diet reduces inflammation, heals the gut, regulates the immune system and allows the body to thrive on a cellular level



*my fertile plate*

  
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