

Dr. Nancy: Alright. Hi, happy Halloween! It's Live With Doctor Nancy at Lunch. I'm in my SpongeBob outfit today. So, this is my yellow shirt that you see. Today we are ... I'm so excited to have with us a fertility specialist. So what I'm seeing in my practice is more and more mom's that are having a hard time getting pregnant, or women in general. They're really having a hard time getting pregnant. I really believe a lot of it has to do with people starting birth control early on, as teenagers and early 20's, I think it's really messing with our hormones. So, fortunately there's alternative methods out there about family planning. So today I'm gonna introduce Chavah Hull, I probably said her name wrong again. She's gonna talk to us about a natural way of family planning, so welcome!

Chavah: Hi thank you so much for having me. So yeah, like Dr. Nancy said, my name is Chavah Hull, and I am a fertility care practitioner. I'm currently in my internship year, but I teach the Creighton Model System. And so there are a few different types of family planning methods; you can have symptothermal, which is what most people are familiar with, with taking your basal body temperature, or there's just mucus systems. And so Creighton is based specifically on cervical mucus, any type of discharge that you see. And with Creighton it's all external checks, so there's no internal checks. So that's something different, that sometimes you get with other methods, is internal checks. Sometimes that can be a bit intimidating. So Creighton has only external checks, which is nice. And we're only concerned with the cervical mucus.

Chavah: And so, a mom, typically, or a woman, not necessarily a mom but any woman, once you hit puberty all the way through premenopause to menopause, in a typical cycle will have a fluctuation of discharge present. And that cervical mucus actually tells us a whole lot about your body. And sadly, most women and girls have lost this knowledge altogether. And so it's my pleasure to help kind of re-empower us, as women, to know our bodies, to know our fertility, and just have a say in our own gynecological health.

Dr. Nancy: So this is good for somebody who's not even necessarily family planning, right?

Chavah: That's right. As soon as you hit puberty your hormones start to try to regulate. And what you see in a typical cycle is, after you have your period ... so you have five to seven days of bleeding, then you will go to a set of dry days, and then you'll have cervical mucus that comes, and that corresponds with estrogen. And so your dry days, and then when you start to see cervical mucus you're having an increase in estrogen. And then, as your estrogen drops and progesterone starts, the progesterone is actually the hormone that gets rid of our cervical mucus, well it just changes it, so you don't see any cervical mucus externally. And then as the progesterone increases and when the progesterone drops, then you'll have another period.

Chavah: So Creighton, and learning to chart, can tell you so much about your body. Yes, it does tell you when you're fertile and when you're infertile, and so if you're trying to achieve a pregnancy you would choose to be intimate on fertile days. And if you're trying to avoid pregnancy then you would choose to be intimate on non-fertile days.

Chavah: But, regardless, if you're not doing anything, if you're a single woman, or you're a young girl, then you can still use Creighton to chart to just learn about your own body. And it will start to tell you about hormone issues, or other things. Like if you're struggling with endometriosis, or if you're struggling with PCOD, all of those things.

Chavah: With PMS ... so like you mentioned Dr. Nancy a lot of doctors, when a mom brings her daughter into the office, or you're going off to college or in high school or whatever, and you may not be sexually active, but you're really struggling with PMS, you're having heavy periods, you're having strong cramping, you may be having breast tenderness, things like that that we associate with PMS, most of the time it's a hormonal imbalance. And so what your typical doctor, your traditional doctor does is prescribes birth control, because what the birth control does is it gives you artificial hormones to help "regulate" your cycle.

Chavah: I just wrote a blog post on this, it's a myth, does birth control regulate your cycle? And the truth is no, but it's confusing. Because you say, "Well, but I have a period every 28, 30 days, how is that not regulating it?" And what the hormones do from the birth control is they suppress the natural cycle in your body, and the natural hormones that you would see. And so fertility care practitioners, those who teach Creighton, we partner with doctors who have been trained to specialize in Creighton and charting, they're called NaPro doctors, NaPro Technology is the medical term there.

Chavah: And we partner with them, and we help a woman or girl to chart, and then you take that chart into your doctor and they can see ... it's crazy, our mucus will tell us if we're having issues with our estrogen, or if we're having issues with our progesterone, and then the doctor can pinpoint those specific areas that need help in your body, and then help your body to produce that naturally. Versus using the pill that is not natural, so that when you go off the pill you're gonna have the same issues that you had going on the pill.

Dr. Nancy: So when do you suggest people start seeing a fertility practitioner like yourself?

Chavah: It's great when we can get moms bringing in their young daughters, you know, middle school, high school, to learn just about your body. Now I typically start seeing the majority of my clients when they're in their early 20's, mid 20's, 30's, when they're thinking about starting a family. And a lot of the women that I work with have been on the pill previously, so then they come off the pill and like you said, they're struggling to become pregnant. They're trying to find ways to achieve pregnancy naturally, versus doing something like IVF or infertility treatments and things like that.

Dr. Nancy: Right.

Chavah: And so, ideally a girl can start ... I have four daughters, they're all very young right now, none of them have hit puberty, but we talk about cervical mucus all the time in my house, we talk about menstruation. I'm also a doula, a childbirth educator, so we talk about birth, we cover the whole gamut. Whoever marries my daughters are going to get

a whole lot of education. But all of that to say, ideally we need to start teaching our daughters and girls about our bodies a lot earlier than we have.

Dr. Nancy: So what does a visit to you, what does it look like, the initial visit? Is it multiple visits, is it one visit, how does that work with you?

Chavah: So it starts with an introductory session, and the introductory session lasts for ... it's about a 90 minute appointment. And typically those are done in groups with other couples, and that's just to lay the foundation of what is fertility, what's actually happening to my body, what does it mean when I'm menstruating? All those things that we should know as women because, well, it happens every month, and it is a natural occurrence, but for most of us we're completely oblivious to what's actually happening there.

Chavah: So we set the groundwork, and then we give a little bit of introduction into Creighton itself. What it looks like to chart, how you do your checks, what cervical mucus looks like. And then we do a follow up, and after the intro every follow up is done privately. It's just you, and either yourself or your spouse or your partner can come as well. And then, for the first four sessions we actually meet every two weeks. Which seems like a lot, but there's a lot to learn. And, one of the reasons I chose Creighton ... so I tried a lot of natural family planning methods for my own self, and then I came across Creighton, and one of the things I love about Creighton is it's very standardized.

Chavah: So for a practitioner ... I mentioned earlier I'm in my internship year, that's actually a 13 month internship and supervision period, where I have two separate on site trainings where I'm there for a week a time, and I have a medical doctor who's training me, and I have another educator who's training me. And then during that supervision time you have to have a certain number of clients, and you're always under supervision with your supervisor, and then at the end of that internship you sit for an exam. That's across the board national exam, so everybody has to pass that exam in order to become a practitioner.

Chavah: And all of that to say, that was really important to me. To have that standardization and that hierarchy, and someone to be answering to, and a system that I can really believe in. 'Cause it's all evidence based, it's backed scientifically, we have doctors that we refer to, that are in our networks, and it becomes in my eyes a very legitimate system. And when I tried other systems, when I had to do cervical mucus checks I had no idea, what is ... they say egg white, what's egg white mucus? I had no idea. Am I seeing egg white, is this not? I don't know. And the thing that sold me on Creighton, honestly, is there's a picture dictionary where we sit down with clients and we show them a picture of each type of mucus. And it's given a specific name, and a specific number, and I'm like, "I'm sold! Now I don't have to guess anymore, I know what this cervical mucus is when I see it, and I'm good to go."

Dr. Nancy: Have you seen clients that don't have any cervical mucus?

Chavah: Yeah, so I'm glad you brought that up. So there are a few symptoms that we might think are normal, but really aren't. And one of those is no mucus discharge at all. And so, you should typically have five to eight days of cervical mucus discharge, and for some women they're not having that, and they're having dry cycles. And we can look at that, and what that's indicating is you're probably not ovulating. You're not having an ovulation, and that corresponds with your hormones, and a lot of times it's associated with infertility. So in order to achieve a pregnancy you have to have good mucus, you have to have good eggs, and you have to have good sperm. And if any one of those three things is missing then you're not gonna be able to successfully achieve a pregnancy and maintain a pregnancy.

Chavah: Some of the other symptoms is too much discharge, actually. So you can have too little or you can have too much. And a lot of individuals who have PCOD, they are having continual discharge and seeing continual discharge. And it also indicates that you may have ... your cervix is inflamed, or something's going on that shouldn't be happening.

Dr. Nancy: The doctors that you refer to, are they typically gynecologist doctors, are they family practitioners? What kind of doctors are they?

Chavah: They are both. So in the area, we had two doctors, we just recently got a third that went through her training. So there are two doctors who are both gynecologists, I believe, at Magnificat, which is up at 86th and Ditch area. And then we have Dr. Holly Smith, who is through IU Health, up in Zionsville I believe. Who is just a family doctor. All of them are great resources.

Chavah: And so then if I am seeing anything in the chart then I can refer them to the doctor, and the doctor can then run hormone panels and do any other checks that may need to happen. And also, with charting ... the neat thing about charting is, a lot of times when you go to the doctor a lot of women are familiar with getting a hormone panel done, even if they're not going to a NaPro doctor, but traditional gynecologists would do hormone panels just on average cycles. So we anticipate your cycle to be 28 days, so on day eight we'll get hormones, on day 14 when we assume you're ovulating we'll get hormones, and then on day 22, when you should have high progesterone, we'll get hormones.

Chavah: But when you're charting you know that the majority of women don't have 28 day cycles, and so the doctor will go off of your actual chart to know when to do those blood tests, when to check those hormones, that you're getting a really accurate read on that. So that's another benefit. And actually a few of the doctors that are in the area all require that, before they'll have their first consultation with the client, that they chart about two cycles for each client before they come in to see the doctor. So that when you have your consultation you actually have the chart in front of you, so that you can talk about things that are important. You can make a game plan.

Dr. Nancy: Oh good. We have a couple viewers, we have Erica and Irene, if you guys have any questions throw 'em at us. We just have a few minutes left. So how successful has been the Creighton Method with pregnancies, or avoiding them?

Chavah: Yeah, so we have ... for avoiding pregnancy it's 98% accuracy rate. And when you start accounting for some user error you get into the 96 -97%. Which is great numbers, it's comparable to birth control without all the side effects, without all of the bad things.

Chavah: And then when it comes for treating infertility ... so couples who are struggling with infertility, with not being able to achieve a pregnancy, when paired with a NaPro doctor, someone who's alongside the practitioner in your chart, we're seeing up to 80% success rates. Which is extremely unheard of, especially in something like the IVF realm. One of the things that sets NaPro apart, Creighton charting apart from something like IVF is with IVF and with a lot of traditional doctors, in looking at something like birth control pill, they're bypassing the problems. What's causing the infertility, whether it be endometriosis, or PCOD, or whatever the cause is, they're bypassing that and just trying to achieve pregnancy. Where NaPro is looking at the infertility or the symptoms as being disease-like, and we need to solve those problems. And we can solve those, then you'll be able to successfully achieve.

Dr. Nancy: That's awesome. As a chiropractor I love [inaudible 00:16:19].

Chavah: Yeah, it's great.

Dr. Nancy: So then are you taking clients currently?

Chavah: I am.

Dr. Nancy: Can we put your information up here?

Chavah: I am actually, I have an introductory session scheduled for the 29th of November. That's a Thursday evening. And that's a group intro. So I try to do one group intro a month, and if for some reason that doesn't work then I do do private intros for couples, if they're interested. But I am taking new clients, transfer clients, and I will just speak really quickly on that. Since the whole method is standardized across the board, you can learn Creighton with one practitioner for a couple months, and then let's say you have an unexpected move, or the schedule conflicts or something, you can easily transition to another practitioner, because we maintain case management and we all teach the charts exactly the same. All of your information and charting and case management can be sent to another practitioner. And the same thing with doctors, and of the doctors who are trained can all look at the chart, can all look at the case management, and across the board will know what's going on with you. Which is amazing.

Dr. Nancy: That is amazing. What's your website then?

Chavah: So it is creatingspacebirthservices.com.

Dr. Nancy: I'm going to type it out real quick.

Chavah: I don't know how to comment, I would comment in for you but I don't see ...

Dr. Nancy: You'll be able to after we're done.

Chavah: Yeah, creatingspacebirthservices.com. And there is a Schedule Now button there, or just Contact, to get more information.

Dr. Nancy: Okay great. We'll also add it in the comments after our live is done. Anything else you want to leave us with? Any tips for our moms or future moms?

Chavah: I think just, and this is becoming a huge word about empowerment, right? Everybody wants to be empowered, what does it mean? And I think mostly finding ways that we can manage our health on our own. Whether that be with exercise, whether that be with chiropractic care, whether that be with our fertility, being able to take the power back for ourselves. Because we can have so much, you know? And so each area, you should learn as much as you can about that. So I'm passionate about fertility, but there's other areas too. Become educated, it's worth it.

Dr. Nancy: Well thank you so much, you were a wealth of information for us today. I learned a lot. I've heard of this method, we've had somebody actually come speak about it, and I continue to learn. I think it's amazing, the more we can do naturally, getting back to the basics, the better our bodies are gonna be. And we're gonna live longer, and be healthier. So I really appreciate you coming on with us today. And we'll put the website in the comments section, so if you want to get a hold of her you can. And again, have a happy Halloween, and we will talk to you soon! Thank you.

Chavah: Bye bye.