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Interview Q&A for Media

An interview with Cindy Bailey, co-author of *The Fertile Kitchen® Cookbook: Simple Recipes for Optimizing Your Fertility*.

Book Description

In *The Fertile Kitchen® Cookbook: Simple Recipes for Optimizing Your Fertility* the authors share simple-to-make, flavorful recipes along with the dietary guidelines that helped them succeed in bringing home a baby. Readers will learn: the importance of diet in conception and pregnancy, what foods you can and cannot eat to enhance fertility, how to identify and shop for healthy ingredients and foods, and how to prepare and cook the nutritious, fertility-enhancing recipes included. This book is endorsed by Philip E. Chenette, M.D. and Medical Director at Pacific Fertility Center in San Francisco, and you can learn more about it at <http://www.fertilekitchen.com>.

How did this book come about?

This book came out of our own experience. After trying to conceive for over a year, we visited a fertility specialist who gave us a 2% chance of conceiving on our own. Of course, I was devastated, but at the same time I refused to accept his grim prognosis. It was simply unacceptable to me that I don't get to have a child, so I did a lot of research and put myself on a fertility friendly diet, among other healing regimens, such as yoga and meditation. Four months later, my husband and I conceived – naturally.

During that time, what made the restrictive diet so much easier to follow was my husband Pierre's cooking. He created a wide variety of dishes that were simple to make, yet full of flavor (you can't tell these dishes contain no wheat, sugar or dairy!). Having those recipes kept us from getting bored and giving up. It made the diet easier to follow and helped us stick with it! Plus, it was a project we could do together, and we both felt empowered by the process. Naturally, we wanted to share what we learned and all the recipes with others in hopes that it might help them in the way it helped us.

What is the goal or message of your book?

Our goal is to spread the message that, yes, you absolutely can make a difference in your own fertility through diet and nutrition! And through our book, we aim to empower women and couples to do so.

Also, because we know first-hand how overwhelming and stressful going through fertility issues can be, we designed our book to be easy to use in every way. Dietary guidelines are painless to follow and recipes are simple, yet flavorful, to make.

Who is this book for?

Women and couples who are experiencing difficulty conceiving, men who wish to support their partners or have fertility issues themselves, those preparing their bodies (and lives) for a healthy conception and pregnancy, and anyone interested in a healthier cleaner diet for long-term health.

Why is diet important for fertility?

It is no secret that what we eat affects our health. Similarly, diet also affects our fertility. Processed sugar, for example, negatively affects blood sugar and insulin levels, leading to hormonal imbalance—and the finely-tuned balance of our hormones is very important to conception. On the flip side, the variety of important nutrients we get from eating an all-organic diet that includes a diversity of organic produce, lean protein, healthy fats, good carbs and so on, helps nourish and support our bodies and our hormonal health—putting us in the best possible position for conception.

What foods should women trying to conceive avoid?

Those which overly tax or stress our bodies. These include alcohol, caffeine, coffee, overly processed foods (including beverages, such as sodas), trans fat, processed sugar and artificial sweeteners. Dairy and wheat products should also be avoided or, better, eliminated because they are hard to digest. Also, many have either a sensitivity, intolerance or outright allergy to dairy or wheat, making them especially hard on digestion and the body. We want to create less work for digestion so our body's energy can be applied elsewhere (such as to our reproductive system) for healing and growth.

You also want to avoid iced or cold beverages (stick with foods closer to your body temperature) and fruit juices (too much concentrated sugar, although whole fruits are great).

Should men follow the diet and recipes too?

Yes! Male partners are strongly encouraged to follow the fertility diet too, for overall nutritional balance. Not only can diet affect such factors as sperm count, motility and morphology, but there is also the fact that 10 to 15 percent of couples have unexplained infertility, meaning the cause is unknown. Since you can never be absolutely sure of all the factors that are causing a your infertility, you should do the diet together.

Male partners should also be sure to get sufficient levels of zinc, selenium, vitamin B12 and vitamin C to help produce healthy, viable sperm. The diet and recipes in our book support these nutrients – namely: our recipes that include lamb, salmon or halibut, shrimp, broccoli, bell peppers and strawberries, for example.

Can you tell me about the recipes you feature in your book?

We feature a variety of ethnically diverse recipes which are all simple to make. Women and couples struggling with fertility issues are often already overwhelmed. We didn't want them to feel changing their diet would be another burden. We wanted them to enjoy flavorful dishes so they wouldn't notice too much that they were on a diet. We feature recipes for vegetables, beans, rice and grains, meat, seafood, soups and salads, sides and sauces and breakfast dishes. We only feature a couple of desserts, as processed sugar is not allowed. Favorite dishes include: Vietnamese Chicken Noodle Soup,

Chicken with Portobello Mushrooms, Lamb Stew, Spicy Garbanzo Beans, Crepes Salée, Chile Con Carne (healthy version!) and more. All are easy to make!

Where do the recipes come from?

Pierre Giauque, my husband and co-author, either made them up (like the carrots and cilantro), or got inspired by what he tasted and then tried to make something similar, modifying it to match the requirement of the diet (like crepes or pasta dishes).

Did you stay on the diet after you conceived?

Yes! Healthy eating is important for embryonic growth and overall health – yours and the baby's.

I still mostly eat this way today, by the way, out of habit! And that's what we hope, that our book will encourage people to eat healthier for life.

Overall, what did you learn from your fertility journey?

To trust my body, and that we have more power than we think we do to make a difference. We may not be able to control, ultimately, whether or not we get pregnant, but we can control our bodies, minds and emotions and put ourselves in the best possible position for conception. We can optimize our fertility and vastly increase our chances of getting pregnant. We have that power.

Is all that you did to conceive worth it?

Our son is absolutely worth every grueling moment on our fertility journey. We've also taught ourselves to eat healthy for life, and we hope to inspire others to do the same.

Additional Questions -

What takeaways will readers get from The Fertile Kitchen® Cookbook?

There are many:

- Easy-to-follow dietary guidelines that will put your body in the best position to conceive
- Knowing what you can and cannot eat via a one-page Quick Reference Guide
- Lifestyle factors and other tips that also support optimized fertility
- Easy-to-make, flavorful recipes that fully support the diet
- Cooking information and tips to support those new to cooking, and to make the process much easier

What are the benefits of going on a fertility diet?

1. Puts your body in best possible position to conceive
2. Gives you control back in your life (empowers you to make a difference in your own fertility)

3. Is something you can share with your partner, and gives your partner a way to help you

If I follow the dietary guidelines in this book will I become pregnant?

Although our dietary guidelines and suggestions are backed by research, and this diet will put you in the best possible position to conceive, we cannot guarantee pregnancy.