



1019: The Oral-Womb Connection: How Oral Health Shapes Fertility, Pregnancy, and Postpartum Healing With Dr. Leedia Riman

Child: Welcome to my mommy's podcast!

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Katie: Hello and welcome to the Wellness Mama Podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com. And this episode was fascinating to me. It's all about the oral womb connection and how oral health shapes fertility, pregnancy, and postpartum. And I'm here with Dr. Leedia Rimman, who is a wealth of knowledge. And I, I feel like I knew a lot about oral health going into this, and I still learned a lot about specifically the womb connection here and the fertility connection and pregnancy outcomes.

She shares a whole lot, and she's a holistic dentist and a visionary in the world of dental health. Best known for her groundbreaking oral womb connection, which reveals how oral health impacts hormones, fertility, and pregnancy. And she and her brother have an integrative practice in Beverly Hills focusing on safe mercury removal, biomimetic restorations, root canal prevention, ozone therapies, responsible cosmetic dentistry and prevention based care for women and children.

And she's a clinician and a mom, a wealth of knowledge, and a very loving mother. You're gonna hear so many key takeaways in this episode, and let's join her now.

Katie: Dr. Leedia, welcome and thank you so much for being here.

Leedia: Thank you for having me.

Katie: This is so fun. I'm excited to dive into a pet topic. Oral health has been something I've been fascinated by for a long time, and I feel like you have perspective that I don't have yet on even more connections, ways that this is connected to whole parts of our body.

So we're gonna get to do a couple episodes together. And in this first one, I would love to go deep on the oral womb connection because I knew things about oral health connected to our heart or connected to other aspects of the body, but I've not heard anyone go deep on the oral womb connection and what, how it is linked to fertility.

And I would guess much more beyond that. So to start off broad, can you kind of give us some background, maybe physiologically and or any other relevant information on this connection between the womb and the oral and oral health and fertility?

Leedia: For sure. So there are so many links between your oral cavity and your womb.

Wait, what? There are histological links, physiological links, hormonal and even energetic. So long story short, when I got pregnant, that's when I really woke up to all of this. Because I had a lot of oral health issues while I was pregnant. As a dentist, I have an implant in the front of my mouth and it got severely infected.

We had to remove it and it was very traumatic. When you're pregnant, the last thing that you need to be dealing with is an oral health issue because it's very stressful. So I started digging deeper. I'm like, oh my God, it's happening to me. And I worked overseas with a lot of women before I had come back to the United States and, and, and, and got pregnant.

And a lot of the women had very destroyed teeth. I'm like, what's going on? You know? What is it? That's when the bell started ringing, and so I started digging in deeper. So 70, over 65 to 70% of pregnant women go through reversible or irreversible dental decay or dental disease, whether it's gum disease or dental decay, dental infections, et cetera.

So when I read that statistic, I started digging deeper, like, why is that? First of all, why is nobody talking about this? Second of all, why is that? What's the root cause of that? And histologically your vaginal tissue and your oral tissue is extremely similar. They're both non keratinized, stratified, squamous epithelium, and in a nutshell, they have a quick turn over.

They both have progesterone estrogen receptors. So we have, we have all the hormonal receptors in our mouth, and hormones don't discriminate. So we have progesterone receptors, estrogen receptors, and we even have a hormone called relaxin that, thank God for relaxin. It allows us to give birth to our babies naturally by literally relaxing our ligaments to allow us to give birth.

But we, our teeth are each housed, each tooth is housed in a ligament called the periodontal ligament, and that ligament also has relaxant receptors. So there's a lot of tooth movement that can occur after pregnancy, especially after consecutive pregnancy. So I really felt that with my third pregnancy. So, and I started digging in deeper.

And periodontal disease has been linked to infertility, lower birth weights, premature labors, two to seven times risk of poor birth outcomes. To me, that's an extremely significant amount. And with the amount of issues that people are having conceiving and keeping pregnancies, and I, I, I wanted to, I wanted to find out why, and that was, that was a huge connection that I came across in a nutshell.

Katie: Yeah, that's so fascinating and it makes sense. I didn't know that it's the same kind of tissue or that there was like hormone signaling available in the mouth like that. But it does make sense when you explain it that way. And I've heard on the energetic side, for instance, kind of that correlation maybe extends even beyond like mouth and vaginal tissue to like also like the cervix and the throat having an energetic correlation.

And as a doula, I'm often encouraging people to like make sounds or relax their jaw to help their cervix move into the flow of labor and get into that spiral movement and relax through the force of it.

But that makes so much sense. And like you said, I feel like a lot of people don't realize that oral health does correlate to the health of the baby to birth outcomes. Like there's a lot more. And I didn't know that statistic of how many pregnant women experience some form of dental problems. So I guess this brings up a whole cascade of fun questions from maybe like all the different stages of if a woman's planning to get pregnant, what are the things she can do ahead of time? And or for a woman who already is pregnant, how do we keep our oral health in a good place during pregnancy?

And or I would guess there's a lot women listening who have had babies like I haven't had, had oral health problems throughout. Different aspects of that. Like is there anything we can do after the fact to help rebuild?

Leedia: That's such a, that's such a great question. I just wanna take one step backward and talk about when all this starts. It's puberty. So for all of our, for all of us, I have a prepubescent daughter that she's about to encounter her first major hormonal shift. Her first major transition.

So that's what we really start when they're babies, right? But that's the first, we're talking about hormones now. So it's really important if you have a pubescent daughter, a prepubescent daughter, let's focus on the oral hygiene aspect of it and not just oral hygiene. That first surge of estrogen and progesterone is going to make her gums a lot more sensitive.

Her teeth more sensitive. It's gonna make her gums a lot more. They tend to bleed easier during that time. It's really a reflection of your, your vaginal tissue. And during that time also, there's a lot of emotional things going on. The hormonal surge makes them have maybe an emotional outbursts.

Also a lack of maybe care to take care of your oral health. A lot of these girls during that time have braces or get into braces, right? And, I don't know what your schooling position is, but if they're going to school and they're eating school lunches, depending on the, the nutritional value of, so it's, we're looking at nutrition, we're looking at the environment, what that girl is going through.

So it's really important to double down when your daughter is going through that phase. Know that her gums are gonna be more sensitive, and to find a trusted doctor to monitor her during this time, especially if she has braces. Because what I'm finding is a lot of them are getting out of braces.

They're ending up with a ton of decay and a lot of gum inflammation. And that start, that, that's starts a, a cascade of trauma, a lifelong trauma. And that comes to her back when she bears children in the future. So, but if you want to get pregnant, this is, this is, this is the time to prep because you're microbiome.

So you have an oral microbiome, you have a gut microbiome, you have a vaginal microbiome, you have a skin microbiome. And your oral microbiome is extremely important. It, it's responsible for about 70%, 60 to 70% of your gut microbiome. And we're passing that microbiome to our children. So a lot of dental decay is not genetic.

Like genetics is maybe responsible 5 to 10% of decay. A lot of it is familial. It's what we're passing on to our children, especially as mothers and caretakers. So find a trusted dentist. Get, you know, the basics, taken care of. Root cause, things like inflammation. Do you have periodontal disease, gingivitis? Do you have metals in your mouth? Do you have amalgam fillings? The worst thing that you can have is like an amalgam filling break during your pregnancy. I see that all the time. It's very stressful because amalgam is made outta 50% mercury and that mercury is extremely toxic. I don't want my baby exposed to that.

Watch your breathing: nasal hygiene. Like make sure you're breathing through your nose. So double down on all the prevention and taking out the basics, you know. Like the things that I just listed. And say, you are pregnant already. It's a myth that it's not safe to go to the dentist. It's very important to visit your dentist during pregnancy. I personally was getting cleanings every month to month and a half during my pregnancies. I had hyperemesis gravidarum which is a pretty severe case of nausea and vomiting. But even if you have the

normal amount of nausea and, and you know, morning sickness. It's good to double down because you're more tired, you're lethargic, you're fatigued, you're building another human.

You're worried about so many things. We're, we're we, we have so much information that we're getting from the world as pregnant woman. So to make, to simplify this, just get more frequent cleanings. I recommend one during the end of the first trimester and one at the end of the second trimester. At minimum, if you do have hyperemesis gravidarum, if you're vomiting, a lot more, if your mouth breathing significantly more. Because as the progesterone rises something, I'm, I'm sure you may have experience, it's called progesterone rhinitis, where your nose is really congested, especially towards the third end of the second, third trimester.

And that makes you mouth breathe a lot. And when your mouth breathing, that is a detriment to your oral cavity because it really offsets your microbiome and debalances it. So that's, those are things to do when you're pregnant. If you are vomiting or having a lot of nausea, baking soda rinses are my favorite, my go-tos.

I would not use any rinse off the market. I like to keep things simple. I like to keep things as natural as possible and as easy as possible. One teaspoon of baking soda to 10 to 12 ounces of water and you just rinse with that for 30 to 60 seconds. I always recommend gargling 'cause that's good for your vagal tone.

And that just alkalizes your entire mouth. What you want to focus on is that you don't want the acidity to rise in your mouth because that's the root cause of dental disease. And that acidity rises by the greater root cause, which is your microbiome.

Katie: Oh, that's so fascinating and I took so many notes. I love the baking soda rinse idea because I've definitely heard, of course, like avoid most mouth washes and how those impact nitric oxide and so many downstream things or microbiome.

And I've also heard, obviously baking soda can be very beneficial, but for some people it's too abrasive to brush with. So I love this idea of rinsing. Side note, not directly related to oral health, but there's some really fascinating research on baking soda in general as actually like a supplement. In fact, it was banned by WADA for a while because it has such a tremendous impact on exercise and our lactic acid threshold and a lot of other things.

So not health advice, but I sometimes will put half a teaspoon of baking soda and water and drink it in the morning for similar reasons of the internal part of the body. So it makes total sense to me that this would also work in our mouth.

And love that I love that you dispel the myth about it being dangerous to get your teeth cleaned during pregnancy. I'm sure a lot of people have heard that one. I know I've heard

that from various people over the years. And I'd love to go even deeper too, into understanding the nutrition aspect of this a little bit more, especially during pregnancy. It makes sense to me, obviously during pregnancy, you can be more tired. It's harder to brush, you can be throwing up which changes your pH in your mouth. And obviously it's a very high nutrient demand time. And like I've seen, your basal metabolic rate is increased. Our demand for fat soluble vitamins and minerals is much higher and it's sometimes harder to replenish them by eating when you don't feel well.

And I've gone deep into some of that research on specifically fat soluble vitamins and minerals and how those help our body keep our healthy enamel in the mouth. And it would seem to me those are in high demand during pregnancy. So are those things for pregnant women to be especially aware of and diet, supplementation?

Like what are some strategies for making sure we don't get too depleted since our babies get whatever they need right off the top?

Leedia: Such a great question. And so yeah, in my office, I, I have finally created like a dream experience for pregnant women and we go into all of this. So this is so great because I just finished creating that experience.

It's going to be called the Bloom experience because as we're blooming, we need to take care of what we are blooming, right? Nutrition is key, it's everything. And I always, when I'm educating and when I'm talking to patients or talking to people like you on podcasts, I always say, of course I'm gonna say things, but take everything with a grain of salt.

Like, if you're not feeling good as a pregnant mama, you gotta listen to your, to your body. And just knowing the key elements is going to help guide you and when you can make the better decisions you do. Okay, so I wanna talk to, so, so with nutrition. A, D, E, K2. Those vitamins, fat soluble are, are essential.

I'm a huge proponent of the Western Price diet. I think it's an incredible baseline, especially as we're building another human. So that is very important. And hydration, key minerals, electrolytes are so, so, so important. They make such a huge difference. So with my third pregnancy, I really doubled downed on my nutrition as much as possible and my minerals.

And I felt a tremendous difference in my postpartum. I was still feeling like crap during my pregnancy, but I tried to replenish as much as possible. So a few little easy things that I used. For example, I, I eat organ meats, not a lot, but I do enjoy liver once a week. But for people who don't, there is a beautiful supplement.

I'm, I'm not endorsed by anybody, but there's 2, 2, 2 brands, Paleo Valley and Heart and Soil. They make a great organ meat, liver, kidney, heart supplement. And if you look back traditionally, how our great grandparents and our great-great grandparents used to live organ meats were I where I'm from, organ meats was a primary.

You ate the whole animal when you kill it, and there is a tremendous amount of fat soluble vitamins in these animals. And it really, really helps with replenishing and remineralizing. Where... and supplementing... So if you're unable to take these for whatever reasons, religious, personal, et cetera, there are supplements that you can take.

But focus on the bone healing and dental healing supplements. The fat soluble supplements, methylated Bs are very important. I drank so much broth. I can't tell you how much broth I drank. That has so many minerals, so much collagen and... So when I talk to a pregnant mom, I, I meet her, where... are you, are you open to trying these things?

And if you are, there's a sustainable way that you can get it. Whether you buy it from the store, you buy it from the supermarket, but have things stocked already. 'cause the last thing you need is you're tired, you're pregnant, and your fridge doesn't have these nutrient filled foods that are easy for you to grab.

Now, I did eat a lot of saltine crackers with my first pregnancy. I was that sick. I did not, I, I'm gonna be honest, I, my nutrition was zero. After each time I ate the saltine cracker, I would drink a lot of water. A lot of water just to wash that down. Like things like pretzels, saltine crackers, bread, those are very, they're just as bad as Sour Patch Kids for your teeth, especially during pregnancy because they're white, you don't really see it, and they're pasty and they stick to your teeth.

And I see tons of decay in my office circumferentially around the teeth, like where the gum meets the tooth in our pregnant woman. That is such a common place where I see decay, and it's because we're eating these snacks to, you know, get us through our days. It, I was in survival mode and those crackers really did help me.

So I can talk about the Western Price diet all day, but when you're feeling like crap, you're gonna, you're gonna do whatever you need to do. So drink a lot of water, wait 30 minutes and then brush your teeth. When you, if you are sipping on, like, for example, lemon water, sip through a straw, think that whatever you're putting in your mouth, it can either do two things, it can acidify your mouth or it can alkalize your mouth.

If it's alkalizing your mouth, like broth, like eggs, like things that are not good, substructure for the bad bacteria to eat up and create acid, then I wouldn't worry as much. Don't, no stress. But if you are eating something like a saltine cracker, which fine. Eat, enjoy. Honey, lots of honey in your tea, whatever, just follow it up with water. Like, think that you wanna

brush your teeth or try to floss. Try to drink a lot of water so that it doesn't sit on your teeth. The key is that we don't want these things to be sitting on our teeth and in our mouth for a long period of time. That's nutrition.

Also, clean your nose really well. This is something that... I don't recommend mouth taping while pregnancy. I'm a huge proponent of mouth taping. I love mouth taping. I do it almost every night, not pregnant. Just because when you're pregnant, sometimes you can get weird levels of congestion. But clean your nose.

So like I use Xclear the B propolis, any sinus spray that you like, and just take a good five to 10 minutes per night to clear out your nose so that you can breathe through your nose. I use essential oils to help with that gua sha to relieve the, the stress in, in the face and to help with lymphatic drainage.

Our teeth are dynamic. They're, they're alive and we want them to stay alive. And each tooth has its own blood supply, nerve supply and lymphatic drainage supply. So we gotta treat them as an organ and honor them so that they can, I always say I wanna die old, healthy, with a full set of teeth and no root canals.

So that this, it's doing these things, allowing for airflow to properly be, to, to be taken in, to properly be filtered for nitric oxide to be made. And nitric oxide is extremely important because it allows us to properly get oxygenated. It causes vasodilation, so you're able to uptake a lot more oxygen during that process.

And as a pregnant woman, we want all the oxygen that we can get. And so yeah, these are like a few little tips to support. And of course, like oral hygiene practices. I love tongue scraping. I, I don't brush my tongue. Get a copper tongue scraper or a stainless steel tongue scraper, but I prefer copper.

It has bactericidal properties. And whatever toothpaste you can tolerate. So I'm, I was only able to tolerate flavorless toothpaste, so that's what I was using. But do what you can in the season that you're in and know not just one mistake is going to ruin every...like, if you have a not bad meal, a meal that isn't conducive to alkalinizing your mouth, that's fine.

Just spend a little more time that night with your hygiene. Clean your nose a little longer and and make your, an appointment with your dentist. Get a cleaning to support the microbiome balance.

Katie: So many good tips. I was taking notes and I feel like those are relevant to like everyone. Probably helpful for teenage girls, especially looping back to where you were or

I have a couple who've had like either expanders for their pallets or just anytime there's anything going on in the mouth, like all that seems especially helpful.

This is gonna age me, but I thought back to you like when you said rinse the mouth before you brush and like dilute that. I was thinking, Captain Planet when I was a kid used to say dilution is a solution to the pollution. And it reminded me of that. It dispells the idea of waiting 30 minutes to brush.

I feel like a lot of people don't know that and they think like brushing right away is good. So that's an important thing to be aware of. I know when I was pregnant I craved lemon water all the time and I probably needed the vitamin C and digestive help, but that reminder to like rinse after is so, so important.

And the nasal rinse is a new one. Like obviously it makes sense that's so connected, but that's not what I would've naturally thought about to like, to incorporate. And also probably very helpful for a lot of people because I've read a lot of us have biofilms in our nasal cavity from various things throughout the years and I know years ago I did a whole flushing protocol for that and I haven't in a while, so I'm gonna take that reminder personally.

And what about for women who have already had babies, but maybe had some of that damage during pregnancy? What's your take on all the things that potentially can be done after? I mean, obviously dental work and the dental world has solutions and I know there's kind of like natural and safer alternatives to a lot of things now. But as far as like nutritionally, how do you feel about the idea of if it's not through the dentin, like remineralizing with the correct use of nutrition and minerals and supporting the body in that way? Or anything we can do to restore? Because certainly pregnancy is a tremendous demand on the body and most of us end up with some deficiencies after for sure.

Leedia: Yeah. Such a great question. So one of my biggest thing is remineralizing small dental cavities. So. The, the enam, the, the tooth has three layers. The anatomy of the tooth. So you have enamel in the outer layer, then you have dentin, and then within the dentin you have your pulp chamber. And that pulp chamber is what houses, what I was saying before, the the nerve blood supply and lymph.

So if your cavity is within the enamel, I don't want to touch it. And what happens is that when you tell a patient that, or when you tell a person that it empowers them because when you start making the changes, the lifestyle changes to remineralize, the small cavity. This isn't only just for your tooth, it's for your whole body.

When you start getting dental decay in your teeth, it's a reflection of your bone. The reason I love mouths, everyone's like, Leedia, why do you love mouth so much? Like I haven't. It's the, it, not only is it the portal to your body, one of the portals to your body, but it's a reflection of your body. I can tell so much about a person's life and what they're going through just by taking a look at their teeth and them having not said anything to me.

So when people start feeling empowered, like, okay, I have a small cavity between my molars here in the back, right? And this is the protocol that Dr. Leedia gave me. I'm gonna follow it to the T 'cause I don't wanna get drilled on. Getting drilled on is, it's not something that people want. I'd be shocked if anybody does.

So if I, so I tell them this is going to require some lifestyle shifts, some lifestyle changes. Like cut your Coke Zero addiction. I had a patient that they were drinking sparkling water. Every day throughout the day. And they thought that was fine because they didn't have sugar. It's not, sugar isn't the enemy, it's the acidity that occurs after the sugar consumption.

So if you have a balanced microbiome, you can consume a little bit of sugar and you'll be fine. But if you're drinking, for example, sparkling water all day, day in, day out, or lemon water like you were doing, I, I did that during one of my pregnancies. That's going to create a very acidic environment, constant acidic environment.

So take a little bit of mouth breathing with that, and that causes a disruption in your oral microbiome. And it's a recipe for dental decay. Okay, so say that you went through that. I, so 60 to 70% of pregnant women encounter dental disease. That's not a low number everybody. It's, it's such a high number.

And in my, in my patient pool, I, I'd say I see maybe 60% of those, like I see mostly women. And, you, first of all, if it's within, if it's within the enamel, we can do a lot in our office to fix it. So first of all, I, I test for your microbiome. I see where your levels are with the dysbiotic bacteria. We use ozone a lot in our office.

Ozone, every single dental office should be using ozone. I don't know how I was practicing before Ozone, it's a wonderful disinfectant. It actually hardens tooth, tooth structure. It hardens small dental decay. And we use it a lot during our root canal prevention procedures that we routinely do because 80% of root canals are actually avoidable and not needed.

And aren't, and aren't needed. But ozone is a key thing that we use. And we do guided biofilm dental cleaning. So we actually stain the biofilm that's on your teeth, which is important for us and for the patient. First of all, I love accountability. I love holding my team accountable, and I love holding me accountable.

And when you stain the biofilm, you need to make sure that you get all of that out. And also when you stain it, I can send you a picture later to show you like that that process. We make sure that our patients see, Hey, you have a lot of biofilm in this area. Let's do a better job brushing here. What is the significance of this biofilm?

The biofilm is what houses all the bacteria in our mouth. It houses the candida, the good, the bad, and the ugly. And that when that biofilm sits on our teeth for a very long time, that's when the acidity rises. So a lot of people don't know this, but the reason that you're supposed to brush at least two times a day, once in the morning and once at night, is to break up that biofilm because when that biofilm sets in, it becomes very strong and a lot harder to break up.

So in the morning when you wake up, the first thing that you should do is scrape your tongue and brush your teeth. Don't eat first. Don't let that acidiness from the night that whatever you detox through your, we detox through our tongue. Don't let that biofilm be swallowed with your breakfast, clean your mouth and then start your day.

So we, we, we work with our pregnant mamas after they come in. And so we work on nutrition, we work on breath work, we work on frequency of snacking. Every time you snack, you increase the level of acidity in your mouth. We work on stress levels. I have a lot of them get on chlorella and start using the sauna to just, you know, detox their body.

Because if we are going to be doing dental work, that's, that's not an insult to the body, but it's a lot after you've gone through having a baby, whether you're nursing or not, or maybe years after you're done having babies. Our teeth hold a lot of energy and our mouth is part of our throat chakra and it's... a lot of trauma comes up in the dental chair.

So we really need to honor the patient as a whole and look at her as a whole and not just a tooth or a cavity that we're filling. And of course, if that cavity is beyond the enamel and the dentin, I definitely recommend addressing it not to wait. And the reason for that is that in dentin cavities spread a lot quicker because it's less mineralized than your enamel.

And, but you still can do the remineralization protocol and things to make your dentin stronger. But you don't want to leave a cavity within dentin 'cause you don't want it to get to your nerve. So there's things like lasers, electric hand pieces, new drill bits that are very important that go in the technical aspects of fixing things.

Katie: That's fascinating. It sounds like, so definitely like there's times and place for remineralizing and both and if it's too deep, but still do the other things so that you can probably hopefully avoid it in other places and or support the healing process.

Leedia: Exactly.

Katie: And all that. I love that you're using ozone. I am excited to see more and more dentists, hopefully getting on board with that. And that you're doing things like testing the microbiome and addressing mouth breathing. And I know there, I hear from a lot of moms who are looking for dentists who are doing those things and who understand that world, and you not only understand it, you're kind of like pioneering some of these things.

It's amazing. So for somebody listening who wants to keep learning or wants specific help on their oral health where can they find you? I know you have a lot of resources available. Where can people find you and keep learning?

Leedia: Thank you for that. I'm at Dr. Leedia on Instagram @drleedia.

We're in the process of launching a brand new website right now we're ourdentalgroup.com, but the website should be ready within the two to three, within the next two to three weeks, but mostly on Instagram. I share a lot of information there and my assistant, you know, for new patient inquiries, they're well taken care of and passed on to our office.

Katie: Amazing. Well, I feel like I already loved oral health and have researched this a lot and I still learned a lot today. I'm super grateful for your time and I know we're gonna get to do another follow-up episode that I think will be very, very relevant to a lot of the parents listening on raising cavity free kids, which is huge because not only, like you said, can early dental experiences be traumatic for them, they can also be pricey.

They can also lead to like way longer term problems when they're, you know, hurting their adult teeth so early on. So I'm very excited for that episode. But for this one, thank you so much for everything you've shared. This has been amazing.

Leedia: Thank you so much for having me.

Katie: And thank you as always for listening, and I hope you will join me again on the next episode of the Wellness Mama Podcast.