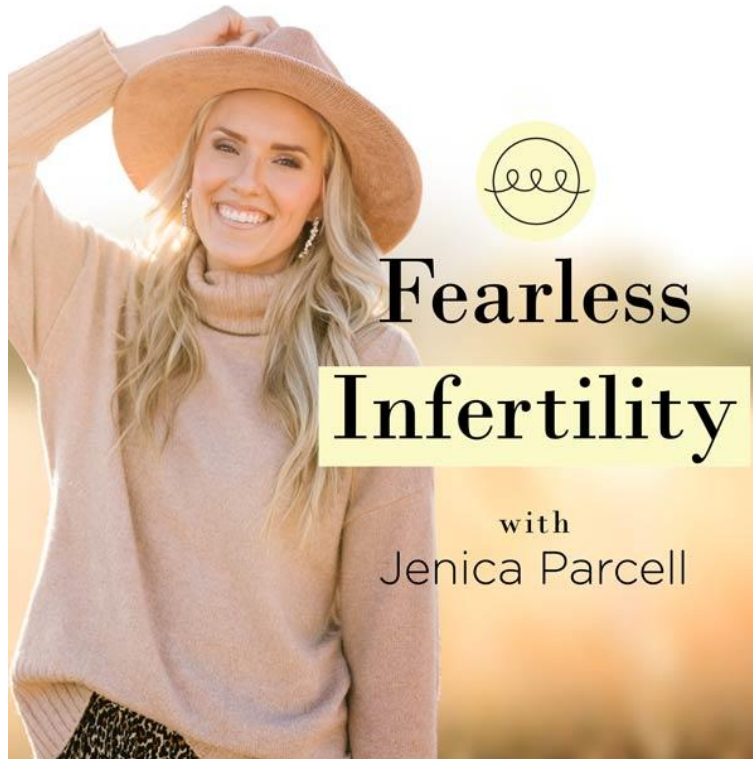


15. The Truth About Hormone-Disrupting Chemicals with Sara Jensen



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jenica Parcell

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Hi, friends. Welcome to *Fearless Infertility* a podcast for women struggling with the mental anguish that comes with infertility. My name is Jenica and after suffering in silence for too long I was able to pull myself out of the dark, take control over my mind, and create joy during my infertility experience. I'm here to help you do the same, sister. Let's dive into today's show.

What's up y'all? Welcome back to *Fearless Infertility*, this is Jenica, your host. And I'm so excited you're here and that you've really chosen to put yourself first today by listening to these incredible tools that can truly help you during your infertility experience.

Today's podcast guest is Sara Jensen and at the end of today's episode you will know why we believe it's so important to share your infertility experience with people who you trust that can support you through the process so you don't need to do it alone. And then also why it's so important to be mindful of what we're putting in our bodies and on our bodies. And chemicals that can really interfere with your hormones. Let's get to it my friends.

What's up y'all and happy Monday if you're here when the podcast launches. Happy Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or Sunday if you're listening on any other day. I hope that you are having a great day so far and it's about to get even better.

I am Jenica Parcell, host of *Fearless Infertility* and I have two miracle twins. Not two sets, just two children total. I don't know if my body could have handled going through two twin pregnancies, but I'm so incredibly grateful to be where I'm at today.

And my goal with this podcast is to help you in your infertility journey. To help you manage your mind and help you take back control and realize that you can feel however you want to feel whenever you want to feel it. And your infertility doesn't need to change. And I'm here to help you take those

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tools to better your life and provide you more peace, joy, happiness, and whatever other feelings that you want in your life.

The winner of last week's podcast rating and review for the giveaway of pajama and socks from The Slice of Sun, PS, side note, I make the best pajamas and socks on the planet for you to wear during your infertility experience so you feel cozy and wrapped up in love and reminded that you are part of this absolutely incredible community of women that are here with you, holding your hand through this process. And they literally took me a year to design because they're literally perfect. The fit, the buttery fabric, you'll just feel so enveloped in love.

So I am giving one away every week to someone who rates the podcast, and the winner of this week, the username, I'm pretty sure this person maybe didn't know that this username would show up, it's Hjjkk and then at the end she says AprilM.

So the title of the review is Life changing podcast. And she says, "This podcast is truly life changing. Jenica provides tools and experiences to help you navigate any of life's difficulties. She helps you to create your best life by examining your thoughts, feelings and actions. She inspires you to make the most of each moment and to take ownership of your best life."

Thank you, April, please email hello@thesliceofsun.com with your size preference and address and we'll get your pajamas and socks shipped out to you. And for anyone else who wants to easily leave a rating and review after you subscribe, please do so and we will announce winners every single week.

This helps us to be able to rank higher so that women with infertility who need the support and community and tools that we have to offer will be able to find this podcast more easily. So that is why it's so important for me and I really appreciate your help with that.

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Let's get to today's podcast guest, I am so excited to introduce to you my new friend, Sara Jensen. Sara and I connected because last year a lot of you were following along when I share about my Epstein-Barr issues. And for those of you who don't know what that is, it is the virus that causes mono.

I was diagnosed with it, well not Epstein-Barr, but the doctor told me I had mono right after I my twins were born, and to be completely honest with you I was like, "You know, I'm going to be really tired anyway with newborns so it's actually fine, I'm just not going to do anything about it." And then like three years later I was just barely keeping my eyes open at 1pm and I'm like, "This is a problem."

My husband, Tyler, told me, he's like, "Maybe there's something wrong with you." And I was like, "No." And honestly you guys I was kind of offended because I was like, "No, you don't actually just understand how difficult it is being a stay-at-home mom to twins that are three." And then after I got done being offended and being ridiculous, I was like, "You know what? You're right. There is something that is wrong, like seriously wrong and I shouldn't be this tired at 1pm wanting to sleep for like 24 hours."

So, long story short I was able to do a ton of research on clean products, both for my skin, beauty, and then also eating really clean. Organic fruits, vegetables, grass fed beef, things like that. And I was able to heal myself and it is like the biggest blessing of my life because I'm now able to pour my energy that I didn't have into being the best mom that I can be and to be the best coach for helping women with infertility that I can be. And those were my two goals and why it was so important for me to feel better.

So, that leads me to Sara, she started her company Hugh and Grace after experiencing infertility. And her sister and her sister-in-law were her and her husband's surrogate. So they have two beautiful children, Hugh and Grace, after experiencing infertility for 14 years.

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And during their infertility struggle they obviously did a lot of research and wondered why, because they had unexplained infertility. They were never able to understand what was going on and why they were not able to conceive. And that led them to do research on hormones and they found that most products, even products that say that they're clean have hormone disrupting chemicals in them that can really, really mess you up, to put it bluntly. It can interfere with infertility, it can interfere with your emotions, it can interfere with weight, it can interfere with pretty much everything.

And they really were so grateful that they had so many people that helped them on their infertility journey once they decided to share, that they decided to create these products that are hormone safe. And I've been using them, I love them.

And in this specific podcast episode I'm thrilled because we really got into, first of all, why we tend to want to keep things that are so close to our hearts, like our infertility struggle, to ourselves. Both her and I did it and then we were so relieved that once we did decide to open up that the help and the support came flooding in.

And I've heard that from hundreds of women, that they feel like they are stuck, they feel alone. And then once they finally decide to share with their friends and their family and other people in their network that this burden is lifted from them.

So we get into that and why doing that is so important. We talk about shame, guilt, and we just talk about her incredible products and why it's important to choose products for us as women, and men, to not interfere with our hormones so they can actually do their jobs.

So without further ado, I will get- Is that how you say it, further ado? Further ado I will get into this podcast episode. Love you guys. Let's go.

Jenica: All right, everyone welcome back to Fearless Infertility. I am thrilled today to have Sara Jensen with me.

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Sara was introduced to me by following one of my friends on social media who posted about her incredible products and I was intrigued. And the reason why I was so intrigued was because this whole last year I went through my own health journey of recovering from Epstein-Barr, which is the virus that causes mono.

And so in doing so I've done so much of my own research on products that are helpful and products that are harmful. And Sara has a whole story about hormone problem causing, that's the non-technical term, issues with products that she discovered when she went through her infertility journey.

So Sara, hello, thank you so much for being on the podcast today.

Sara: Hi, it's so nice to be here.

Jenica: Thank you. Okay, so I would love for you to tell everyone, to start off with how did you like find out about these hormone interfering products and tell us like kind of the background on that in regards to infertility.

Sara: Yeah, so I mean, I have some like backstory, we were married for 19 years and we spent 14 of those years trying to get pregnant unsuccessfully. We were diagnosed unexplained infertility, which at the time was, and it still is, maddening. Because you think unexplained, you know, find something, fix it. I don't care what it is, just find something to fix it.

And so during our infertility journey we were doing everything that we knew to do. We spent all of our money going to fertility doctors across the country. I hate needles, I was doing acupuncture. I was an ultra-marathoner, I stopped running because they told me the running chicken doesn't lay the eggs. I know, who knew?

Jenica: Interesting, never heard that before.

Sara: Who knows if that's true or not. But really, we were that desperate, where we started doing everything. And during the process I didn't even

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know that I should be looking at products because they were- And you know, thinking, okay, I'm eating right. I'm doing everything "right" but I had never thought like what I was putting on my skin. Even though I was administering hormone creams.

When you think about it, the hormone creams you put them on your body and they go right into your bloodstream. Think about a nicotine patch, it goes right into your bloodstream. And so it was during actually one of our rounds of IVF.

I had done multiple, multiple rounds, and during one of the rounds, he said, "You know how about avoid eating sweet potatoes on this round?" And I said, "Sweet potatoes? Those are healthy for you." And he said, "Well, sweet potatoes, they can have estrogen like effects, and they can all see your hormones. And because you haven't had success, you know, the prior several rounds, let's just really watch everything."

And so I came home, told my husband and we said, "If sweet potatoes can affect our hormones, what else was out there?" And we did a deep dive into research. And we learned about chemicals that are called hormone disrupting chemicals. And these hormone disrupting chemicals, they're everywhere. They're in most personal care products, including clean and non-toxic products.

So everyone knows about toxins, and actually, just now people are starting to talk more about this hormone disrupting chemicals. But these chemicals, they impact your hormones. And when you think about your hormones- When we first learned about hormone disrupting chemicals, we were looking at it through the lens of infertility because that was our obsession and our life for 14 years, trying to figure out that. But your hormones regulate everything from your mood, your weight, your sleep, I mean, ultimately your health.

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And so when we were reading and going through the science, we saw that these hormone disrupting chemicals, they're linked to infertility, but they're also linked to cancer, to autism, and ADHD, and Parkinson's, and obesity. Then also learning more holistically how your hormones impact your health, your body. And then learning that most products, even clean non-toxic products, contain these chemicals we decided we should do something about it.

I can tell you the happy end of the story then we can go back into fertility treatments.

Jenica: Okay, I love that.

Sara: The happy end of the story is my husband's sister volunteered to be our surrogate and gave birth to our son Hugh. And then my sister volunteered to be our second surrogate and gave birth to our daughter Grace.

Jenica: That's so amazing, they're like true angels honestly on Earth.

Sara: Seriously. And it was lesson for us because for the first 10 years of our fertility struggle, we didn't tell a soul. We were, I don't know, I was ashamed, I felt broken. I had all of these feelings of doubt and depression and misery. And I just didn't feel like I needed to share it with anybody. My husband and I both come from very large families, everyone's having kids, all our friends had kids. And so I didn't feel like people could really relate.

But it wasn't until I opened up, actually the first time I told anybody in our families that we were struggling with fertility is when we had the offer for someone to be our surrogate. And then the same thing later. So it's just, for me, it was a lesson that oh, I should have opened my mouth earlier.

Jenica: Yeah, that's so interesting you say that because I think a lot of us, a lot of my listeners here feel the same way. And I went through the same thing too, where you just kind of want to handle it on your own, and you're

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tough and you're independent. And for me when I decided to share, it was after three IUIs and two rounds of IVF and I was just physically and emotionally exhausted. I felt like the weight was genuinely just pushing down on my shoulders.

And when we decided to share it was such a big decision because you have your heart on your sleeve. And it's almost like you're scared to share, at least I was because I was scared that I would maybe offend other people or people would offend me. And it was just like such a sensitive thing for me.

But then I realized that the exact opposite happened. And, you know, we've heard so much about shame, I think it's a big topic lately because I think a lot of people experience it for different reasons. But for me, I think when I opened my mouth about sharing infertility, I honestly almost wouldn't believe it unless I physically experienced it myself. But I felt like the weight was lifted off my shoulders because other people were helping me carry it.

And people knew and they were helping in different ways by, you know, praying for us or dropping off gift packages to know they were thinking of us. And I was just honestly completely blown away. And I love that you bring this up because I think that people have a lot of shame around it. And I think that could probably be a topic for a whole different episode, there's so many reasons why.

But I think that it's so helpful when we do share, because then we can get the help that we need. Otherwise, how are people going to know?

Sara: Agreed. And it was crazy for us because we were just so, so private and felt judged and felt lots of different emotions. But so the first time I told my sister in law I said, you know, "We were trying for 10 years, nothing has worked." And she said, you know, "I'm family, I'm happy to be your surrogate." And I thought she was kidding. You know, I was like, "Who says that?" And so I didn't tell my husband about it.

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And a week later she called and said, “You know, I talked to my husband and my kids, and did a lot of research. We want to do this for you.” And then we didn't even tell my side of the family that we were expecting. And to be fair, it took my first surrogate three different attempts to get pregnant. So it wasn't, you know, right off the bat and working right away.

But then I told my sister, we were almost to our second trimester. And my sister said- We were really close growing up, we're less than two years apart. And she said, “Had you told me I would have I would have helped you.” And I know a lot of people when they share, they don't get offers to have surrogates but just taking that emotional toll.

But then also, when we were expecting it was really hard for me to tell, like I was so excited we were having a baby but being not pregnant and visibly not pregnant, to see people's reactions and say we're having a baby and, you know, it's our baby I'm not carrying it. I was so concerned about being judged, we live in Los Angeles, there's a lot of vanity here. And what people would say and do.

And we just had so much love and kindness expressed to us. I had friends throw baby showers, sister-in-laws who I had not been connected with for years. And I was surprised at the outpouring of love we received.

Jenica: Yeah, it's so amazing, we build up this fear in our head. And then I think a lot of times what we build up is like a million times worse than it actually is or will be. And so why do you think, in your view, you were scared to tell people? Like what was your main concern?

Sara: I was really concerned with the judgment and not being able to react the way- It was just such a sensitive topic for us because we had gone through this and, you know, your hormones are crazy on these fertility rounds. And so I think I was extra spiked.

So the fear of sharing my infertility because, as a woman, and in infertility there's not ever fault, but just as a woman I'm like my role is to carry a baby

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and to get pregnant. And this is what me as a woman is supposed to do. So I felt very broken.

And so feeling shame and upset, you know, I remember crying and just telling my husband, I said, "You should divorce me. Like I can't give you a baby." And he said, "No." He's like there's no like, "This is our issue together. This is not just on you."

But you have that feeling of insecurity and pain. And then to have to express to other people you're finally over the hump, you know, finally expecting. And then I didn't want to also have to tell my story and say, "Well, I struggled for all these years." And how hard it was for me. I felt like I shouldn't have to explain myself, even though I ended up explaining myself every time. It's just not simple.

Jenica: Yeah, yeah. Well, I love that you bring this up too, because I just recently graduated from this coaching program. And I absolutely love it, because it breaks things down very simply in terms of like why we feel certain ways. And it always comes back to our thoughts.

And it's so interesting that you bring this up about your body not working how it's supposed to because that's a very common one that I've heard from a lot of my clients and from women experiencing infertility. And it's so interesting because we have this idea in our head and our thoughts are whatever we want them to be.

So if we choose to think that that's true, we can see that it causes us to feel like this fear of judgment. Or a lot of times what I like to call jumping in someone else's model. Which is essentially trying to control what other people think. And I think that we think falsely if we can do that then for their approval it will be fine.

And I think a lot of that stems from just wanting to fit in. And I think our brains are trying to protect us. And when we fit in, we're not on like the edge of society, essentially, right, in our brains. Our brains are trying to

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protect us and like way, way back like hundreds of years ago, that was a good thing. Because when you were isolated, you literally would die because you wouldn't have like the support of like getting the food from your clan or whatever.

But I think that we hold on to these ideas and thoughts. And then when we really examine what they're doing for us, we can see that A, we can change them because we can believe whatever we want to believe. And B, we can see the ones that we think are so true and that are protecting us are actually not because we can see that they're keeping us isolated.

Sara: Agreed. Yeah, because I was so scared to tell people. Then I told people and they were so happy for me. Like why was I, why did I carry so much of this weight when I didn't have to?

And then also sharing, we had to share because we had a surrogate, you know, but I would say almost every single person I spoke with had either had an experience with infertility or knew someone or had someone close to them that had some issue. Or they would share with me their issue, whether it was related to infertility or health or their struggle. But by being vulnerable and sharing that this is something that we're doing, it connected me to people in ways I never knew possible.

Jenica: Yeah, I love that you mentioned that they were able to open up with you because then, since you're vulnerable, then you feel like a safe space to then open up about their issues. Which, like you said, may be infertility and maybe not. But I think that's such a cool thing.

And I think that's probably one of the biggest lies that we tell ourselves and that society tells us, or wherever it comes from, is that we just need to handle things by ourselves. And I think that as human beings we will always be better when we come together and help each other. Because something that you've experienced with your talents is going to be

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something that's completely different than what I've experienced with my talents.

And when we come together as a whole it's like this amazing puzzle that comes together where you can lift me up and I can lift you up because we're not the same, but our strengths together make like this amazing strong puzzle.

Sara: Agreed. Yeah, during our infertility my husband I really stepped away from our families. We didn't want to go home for holidays and see all the kids, and our siblings living the life that we wanted. Especially when we were in private on our infertility. So we really kind of pushed ourselves away.

And then my sister, when she gave birth to our daughter, our second child, her stipulation is that she wanted our entire family to be in the hospital room. I'm the oldest of six and so, you know, so it was us, and my parents, and her husband and my husband. And we had to get like special clearance from the doctor's offices. And it was probably the most- I delivered my daughter, it was one of the most special days of our lives.

And I just remember thinking, you know, how interesting that infertility is what really kept us away from our family, bonded us in a way that was incredible. I mean to have everyone there supporting and to see that pouring of love. And it was amazing that everyone sacrificed and flew to Oklahoma for the birth.

Jenica: Yeah, that's so beautiful. That's just really such a testament too, of you choosing to share and what that one choice did for you. I mean, yeah, it was a really brave choice. You put your heart out there, you did put yourself out there to be judged. But you can see like the beauty that that brought into your life, and that really like brought all of you together. And that's such a cool thing too for them to experience.

Sara: Yeah, I'd say I'd do it again but I don't want to do it again.

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Jenica: Yeah, exactly. You're okay that it happened like this because you can see the beauty in it now, but like also let's not repeat that.

Sara: No, we joke, so my husband and I started a business that I can get into later. But we named the business after our kids Hugh and Grace. And so we joke that this is a third child that we're actually birthing.

Jenica: Yeah, that's a good point, I love that. Yeah, honestly that's actually a beautiful way to describe a new business. I feel the exact same way, it's like this beautiful idea that you have in your head that you like physically make come to life. And yeah, I love that.

Okay, so I would love to get into first the thoughts or thought, what would you say really helped you to be able to continue to move forward? Was there like an empowering thought that enabled you to be brave?

Sara: Yes. And I remember it was very distinct. My husband one day, this is probably eight years into our struggle. I came home one day and I was stressing out because I was mid 30s, I think, or later 30s at the time. And he said, he's like, "Sara," he's like, "are we only going to be parents to kids, our genetic children that you give birth to, or are we going to be parents?"

And we sat and thought and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, no." we were at that point, like I think everyone has to make a decision where you are. But we just looked at each other and said we are going to be parents. And that took such a weight off our shoulders because I was so worried about, you know, getting older and egg quality, and sperm quality, and rush, rush, rush, and wait, wait, wait, and kind of thinking this is never going to happen.

We were able to take a breath, take a break and say, "Okay, there are more options now than ever before to be parents. Whether it's egg donor, sperm donor." It's crazy but we had never even considered surrogacy. We just thought, "Okay, we're going to do all these rounds of IVF then look at adoption." It was just take a step back and breathe and say, "Okay, we're

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going to be okay. There are ways to be parents.” And to know that we can accomplish our dream that we said, “Okay, we'll do it.”

Jenica: Yeah, I love that. That's such an awesome thought too. And what I teach all the time is that you can choose thoughts that benefit you. And just because that thought maybe benefits somebody else and, you know, like you can choose what's true for you. And so I love that you took that thought that was true for you and made it so that you were able to step forward.

Because I think that often times, like when we're reading or when we're comparing our lives to other people, we can think about these thoughts that we're like, “Oh, that's not true so that won't help me.” But I love that you chose a thought that really empowered you and like you said, lifted the burden off your shoulders to help you see possibilities that weren't there before.

Sara: Thank you. Yeah, that's what really helped me. And then also just thinking, like people asked me like what would you change? And I said, “I wish I were kinder to myself. I wish I would have shared earlier.” Just the fact that there was support available, but just to be kinder to myself and have more positive self-thoughts.

Jenica: I completely agree. Because I think that it's so interesting, there's thoughts that are so deceptive that you genuinely think that they're helpful, like, oh, I should be doing this, or I should be doing that. For example, my body should be doing this. Well, that seems like a thought that's just like a nice little thought. But then you think about what feelings that cause, and it's shame and guilt. And what do we do when we feel shame and guilt? Nothing productive.

And so I think that it's so helpful to choose thoughts that are beneficial to self-love, because then in turn you're going to reach your goals faster. And it seems like those tough thoughts sometimes will get you closer to your goal more quickly.

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But I think it's important to always remember the feelings that you're getting, and if it's a thought that's beating yourself up and you feel like garbage, then you're not going to get to the result that you want as quickly as you would if you were to approach it with love.

And so that's such a great recommendation. I think that honestly, pretty much everybody that I interview says the same thing. And I think it's like, you would think that we would learn, right, a little faster. But we all have our own journeys and we all are able.

So I love that you have that experience now because I'm sure, you know, like we all have trials throughout our whole lives. And now moving forward you and anybody else that has learned that can now take that self-love and apply it to any other trials that you experience in the future, which is a good thing.

Sara: Agreed.

Jenica: Yeah. Okay, so I have a question for you, transitioning a little bit over into your products. So like how did you guys continue to learn after that whole sweet potato experience? Because that's actually very surprising for me too, because you would think like sweet potatoes, I've heard my whole life those are so healthy.

Sara: They are healthy and that's also what we thought, like sweet potatoes are great for you, they're a super food, definitely eat them. But at that point just because he couldn't figure out my hormones that was to the point of like desperation. We start learning about chemicals and we're like, "Wait, these chemicals are everywhere."

And then I think also after having our kids, we spent 14 years working for them, my husband jokes, because I told him, I said, you know, "We had so many people sacrifice to help bring us our kids." And I said that we know a lot about a topic that a lot of people don't know about. And I felt like it was our role to pay forward. You know, how do you repay the gift of life? You

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can't. But I said we have a lot of connections, and our network is great and we both have master's degrees. And I said, we need to create something that can help other people.

He's like, we worked for 14 years, we finally have our kids, can't we just enjoy? And of course we are enjoying them. I actually resigned during maternity leave to start our business because we felt compelled to share. And to not only just share, but to create something that other people could use they could feel good about. Because working, going through all this stuff, infertility, I was trying to do my best. I was trying to do everything, "right" and not even realizing that what you put on your skin has such an impact.

So we continued to learn about hormone disrupting chemicals. And we said, what can we do that can actually make a difference? And realizing that your skin is your largest organ, and what you put on your skin gets into your bloodstream.

And also that there's so many studies that show that women when they're trying to get pregnant, men and women, when they're trying to get pregnant should really be looking at their skincare, because when you think about it that's when you're actually creating the sperm, creating the egg. And then also during pregnancy, it's not just what you're using during pregnancy.

They have been showing a lot of studies that show if pregnant women are exposed to high levels of hormone disrupting chemicals there is a lot of health issues for the baby in the future, loss of IQ points, low sperm count in the future. The studies are very frightening and overwhelming. But we said what can we create? What can we do that will have the biggest impact to what we call our chemical exposure, chemical body load?

And so we launched with, actually our official launch is next weekend. But we launched with four products because we said, "How can we do this and

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also introduce this topic in a way that's not overwhelming, that's elevated, that's simple?

So we went to work, we tapped our networks, we were introduced to the largest beauty manufacturer in the world, with their chief innovation officer and team and flew all over the country interviewing people and saying, "This is what we want to create." Every formulator said I've never heard of this and we really can't do that. It's easier and cheaper to use chemicals because we wanted really high performing products.

I remember the formulator that we actually ended up working with, they've been doing natural products for over 30 years, a lot of award winning products, which is why I also liked them. So we needed to have the performance there. And I remember he walked into the room and he said, "The world does not need another face serum. The world does not need other body oil."

And we explained to our story and what we wanted to create and the science and we have a world renowned Medical Advisory Board backed behind us. And at the very end of the meeting he's like, "Okay, the world needs this." He's like, "I've been in this industry for 30 plus years." he's like, "I've never- Let me let me go to work. Let me see what we can do and how we can do this."

And so it took years but we now have our products, which we love and getting really great reviews and press. But the thing is, we formulate our products without hormone disrupting chemicals that we don't want and there are over a thousand hormone disrupting chemicals. I mean lavender and tea tree oil are also hormone disrupting chemicals, which is crazy to think.

But we really want to focus on what we are, so our products help detox, repair, and protect the body. And we don't make any health claims, we're not saying we're going to get anybody pregnant or cure cancer. What we

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are saying is you can reduce your chemical exposure by doing four simple things every single day.

So we have our cleansing bar, we have our body oil, we have a morning face serum and night face serum. And the average, when we're talking about chemical exposure the average woman puts on 168 chemicals a day. The average man puts on 85 chemicals a day. So if you can start swapping out products that perform just as well or better than your other products, there you are daily already reducing your chemical exposure.

Jenica: Honestly, I have had such a testimony for myself in my own life of this. Because like I mentioned at the beginning of the episode, last year, I was literally so sick that by 1pm, I would want to go to sleep every day. And I was like, "What is wrong with me?" You know, and essentially like it comes down to I basically had mono.

And I guess like 95% of the world's population has this Epstein-Barr virus in their bodies, but most of our immune systems can fight it off. And if your body goes through something, either super traumatic physically or mentally then it can bring it out because your immune system just can't fight it anymore, which is what happened to me.

And it came out after my twins were born. And at first, I didn't really think much of it because I was like, "Well, I am going to be exhausted anyway, I have newborn twins, not a big deal." And so I just kind of like went about my daily life. And then it just got worse and worse and worse.

And so last year I had to stop and take a look at it because it was impacting my life. And it really came down to the fact where I wasn't being the mom that I wanted to be because I had so little energy and I wasn't being able to be as creative as I wanted to be in developing The Slice of Sun's infertility community. And I'm like, "This is impacting more than just me now, this is impacting other people's lives." And so I really had to take a step back and do my research.

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And honestly, it was such a relief to find out that natural products on the earth could heal me and, you know, it was just like such a sigh of relief. And yes, eating a lot better is change. It's, you know, eating like raw fruits and vegetables for like a month or so, I think that's all I ate for like a month and then I started going crazy so I needed to incorporate a little bit more. But with like herbs and supplements I started healing myself, but there were still some issues.

And then I started learning about these hormone disrupting chemicals and one of the things I swapped out- So I used to have really, really bad periods and so I'll get cramps pretty bad. And they were so bad to where I had to get back on my birth control again, because I didn't even want to have a period because it was like debilitating.

And I started doing some research and one of my friends told me, they're like, that's a sign that something's wrong. And so that kind of made me dig a little bit more. And it wasn't just my food I was putting my body was my products I was using. And one of the things I switched out was just my hair care, my hairspray. And within two weeks my next period my cramps were like cut I would say by three fourths. I mean, they were so minimal compared to how they were.

And I swapped out my deodorant. And I started using your face serum. And to be honest, I don't know if I would truly even believe what a big impact it would have if I hadn't experienced it myself. It's honestly mind blowing. And when you get back to the basics of taking care of your body the way that it should be without all these added chemicals and crap that just puts like this huge burden on our hormones and our immune system and all that, it's like your body can actually function the way that it's supposed to. It's miraculous.

Sara: Your body can heal itself because it's not now fighting off chemicals, it's not fighting off this outside exposure. We've had a lot of people tell us that our products have helped a lot with eczema. We as a company can't

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say that, but we've had like even doctor Valenton is a world renowned OBGYN, she's on our Medical Advisory Board, and she said, "My son has had severe eczema his whole life. We've used steroid creams, can't ever find anything." She's like, "Two weeks on your body oil, like it's almost gone."

And so I just feel like to your point of your body is being healed with natural substances, with natural products. And then it can also turn its attention to helping heal the rest of the body.

Jenica: Yes, I love that. And I love that you mentioned that too because our bodies are like, I mean, they're like super computers on steroids. They're like the most incredible things ever. And I think what we put on our bodies a lot of the time inhibits just the natural healing that it can do on its own if you don't like burden it so much, which is amazing.

Sara: Yeah, it performs better. Like I'm in my 40s now, my skin is better. Also, we noticed with my fertility treatments not only was it depressing because failure every single month and I was moody, but like I had terrible skin. I had cystic acne, I had pregnancy mask because all the hormones. And so the fact that I'm now addressing skincare my skin is better in my 40s than it ever was my 20s and 30s. I'm like, "Okay, pay back. This is good."

Jenica: Yeah, and honestly, you guys, I'm looking at her right now, she doesn't have any makeup on right now, her skin is amazing. And that's a testament too. It's like treat your body right your body's going to treat you right. You're going to be the next America's Next Top Model girl.

Sara: All you need is Hugh and Grace.

Jenica: I love it. And you know what's interesting? As you were saying that about like being depressed and anxious, I didn't really relate this a whole lot until now I don't think, but I used to get seasonal depression like really badly. And I didn't take medication for depression necessarily, I feel like I

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could still, I guess I shouldn't say really badly, right? But I could still function but I was just like depressed. And when you live in Utah, when it's like literally cold six months out of the year, that's a long time to be seasonally depress.

And it's so interesting because this year I didn't have it at all. And I'm just putting the two and two together that changing my diet and changing my products, I'm sure that had most to do with it. Because I wasn't interfering with these hormones and my body could do what it needed to do so I could stay like mentally well.

Sara: There are actually articles about hormone disrupting chemicals and depression. I mean, you just don't realize the level of- Hormones impact everything. And so to be able to try to not harm that with chemicals it's going to get a huge impact.

Jenica: Yeah, definitely. Okay, so where should people start? Because I loved what you said, your mission in part was so that people wouldn't be overwhelmed, we could simplify it. So where would you recommend people start when they are making changes in their routine to reduce their chemical load?

Sara: So the simplest way is personal care. It's interesting, I did an Earth Day event with Tracy Anderson. If you don't know who she is she's a fitness trainer and has her whole program. But she talked about hormone disrupting chemicals and she said, "You know, it's a lot of like lifestyle, diet." And she said, "Self-care is actually easier. You just buy new self-care and put it on versus altering your workout schedule." And yeah, because it is.

So self-care is actually one of the fastest ways to impact your chemical exposure. So I think they did a study with it, like even within two weeks you can reduce your chemical exposure by a third just by using great products, so self-care.

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Jenica: Yeah, I'm so glad you mentioned that because that's what happened to me too. I could not believe what change I felt in two weeks after changing my hair spray, just my hair spray. I was like, "What?" So you're right, it's like it seems overwhelming but it's actually not. You can make these small changes pretty quickly and you can see an impact soon.

Sara: Yeah, some simple ways are if you come in from outside take off your shoes, take off your jacket, leave it at the front door, because you think about the chemicals that are outside. Have air filtration, have filtered water, that makes a huge difference. And then eat organic where you can.

You know, the Environmental Working Group is a great resource because they'll tell you what the best- First of all, they have an app called Skin Deep and so you can go and you can actually look at your products and they'll tell you how safe it is on a scale of 1 to 10. Unfortunately, they don't really talk about performance.

Jenica: Yeah, good point.

Sara: But you can see what you're putting on your body. And then also like with our face serum, we've had a lot of people say, you know, "I used to use four products. I used a face serum, a moisturizer, and eye cream, and a vitamin C serum. I'm just using your one product." And like just to be able to eliminate the number of products you're putting on your body.

So I've mentioned that the chemicals you put on your body every day, the average woman puts on 12 products a day. To be honest, I probably put on more because you think about like even different hand soaps used throughout the day. I still wear makeup, I still like live normal life, but if you can have a really good base and protect your skin, then you're safer there.

Then just then also looking at what you eat, the lifestyle you live, there's a lot of different ways you can be better. But our whole motto is, and our hashtag is better than clean. So our products are better than clean, meaning it's better performing, they're also better for you.

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But I think for me, also, I'm such an extremist or all or nothing. And so if I think, "Okay, I need to be 100% pure, I need to be at this level." Then I tend not to strive for it because I think, "Oh, I can never reach it."

So you will never be able to eliminate these hormone disrupting chemicals from your life, but if you can make small swaps and do it in ways that are easy, switching out a bar of soap, switching out some products where it can actually make a difference. But that's, for me, the easiest part to start.

Jenica: I love that idea because I used to be the same way too when it came to extremes. But I'm all about moderation now because I really see like those small changes make a big difference. And yeah, I'm still going to have a cookie and it's not going to be organic flour sometimes, you know? But my body can handle it because I'm treating it so much better in so many other ways, with my products, with like a lot of organic fruits and vegetables, a lot of clean meat, things like that where it's able to heal itself.

And so when I do stuff like that, which is at least several times a week, it can handle it now. So yeah, I mean, it's not all or nothing. You can make really amazing changes that don't have to be like this big life altering events, they can just be really simple things.

And I told Sara when we first started this, before I started recording, that I use her serum at night and I love it because I don't have to put on a serum and then a moisturizer, it's just all in one. And for me it moisturizes and it's so easy.

And like no one needs added hardness to their life. Our lives are all busy, we're all just like trying to get by and do the best we can. So I love that your products really simplify our routines while also being like the best option for us and like you said, they work. Like you're not substituting clean for products that don't work. They actually do the best job, in my opinion, of taking good care of your skin.

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Okay. Well, thank you so much for coming on, Sara. It's been so amazing to meet you and have someone who is on our team of women in the infertility community to really go above and beyond and create products and a mission of education. And so thank you so much for your work. And thank you for being on this podcast today.

Sara: You're welcome. I would also love to share something.

Jenica: Yes, please.

Sara: Yes, so for your viewers, when we were trying to figure out how to sell our products, because realize we call our products hormone safe. People do not know what hormone safe means, you put that on a shelf and, you know, you walk by and you're like, "Why is that important?"

So we have a peer to peer sales model where we have brand advocates who earn money, earn rewards and commissions by promoting our products and our story. We realized that our mission is best shared word of mouth, and our products are best shared word of mouth. And what I think is also especially important to this community is that I had a lot of friends who were able to sell products and get involved with companies and able to earn additional income for their fertility treatments.

And it's something that they can do on the side where they can promote great products, the mission, and talk about something new and interesting. And we have an amazing community, several people in our community have struggled with infertility. But also a lot of people just care about, well, some people just care about great products, some people-

Talking about hormones, it's interesting, we have an Olympian who is selling our products right now because she's all about hormone optimization performance. And she's like, "I had no clue that these products could impact my hormone levels." So for anybody who would like to get involved go to hughandgrace.com, join us and become an advocate. And we'd love help sharing our message and using amazing products.

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Jenica: Awesome. And I'll have everything linked here in the show notes as well so it's easy to access. I'll have the Instagram handle, I'll have their website linked, and everything linked so you guys can easily access Sara and learn more about her amazing products.

Sara: And we'd love to give your viewers 10% off. So what code would you like?

Jenica: Let's do code Jenica.

Sara: Jenica10.

Jenica: Okay, perfect. Jenica10, so I'll include that in the show notes as well. I love that. And I really think you guys will like their products a lot. So thank you, Sara, that's very generous of you. I'm so excited about that.

Sara: Yes.

Jenica: Okay, awesome. Anything else you need to share or would like to share before we jump off?

Sara: No, I think that's great. I just wanted to get in there that people can get involved if they wanted to.

Jenica: Okay, I love that. That's amazing. Okay, thank you, Sara.

Sara: You're welcome.

Jenica: I'll catch up with you soon.

Sara: Glad this worked.

Jenica: Thank you.

To celebrate the launch of the show I'm going to be giving away pajama and sock sets from The Slice of Sun that I have personally designed. They are the most buttery, soft, delightful things you'll ever put on your body. And

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I'm going to be giving away five bundles to five lucky listeners who subscribe, rate, and review the show on Apple Podcasts. It doesn't have to be a five star review, although I sure hope you love the show. I genuinely want your honest feedback so I can create an awesome show that provides tons of value to you who are experiencing infertility.

Visit [thesliceofsun.com/podcast launch](https://thesliceofsun.com/podcast-launch) to learn more about the contest and how to enter and I'll be announcing the winners on the show in an upcoming episode.

Thank you for listening to *Fearless Infertility*. If you want more tools and resources to help you during your infertility experience, visit thesliceofsun.com. See you next week.