

LET US TALK ABOUT

Environmental Health Before Pregnancy

A comprehensive reference guide to the home changes that matter most before you conceive, one room and one habit at a time.

DR. LEILA DOOLITTLE

WELCOME

Progress always matters more than perfection.



The months before a pregnancy are one of the most meaningful windows in a family story. The egg that may become your child, and the sperm that meets it, are maturing right now, inside the environment you live in every day.

This guide is designed to help you create a healthier home over time. Do not feel pressured to make every change immediately. Work through the list gradually, making improvements as products need replacing or as your budget allows.

With care,
Dr. Leila Doolittle



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CHAPTER ONE

Why the Home Matters Now

Before a pregnancy begins, the cells that will build it are already listening to their surroundings.



THE PRECONCEPTION WINDOW

Three months that shape a beginning

The egg. An egg spends roughly three months in its final stage of development before it is released. During that time it is sensitive to nutrition, blood sugar, inflammation, and chemical exposure.

The sperm. Sperm take about two to three months to form and mature. Heat, smoking, alcohol, and some environmental chemicals can affect their quality.

The first weeks. The neural tube, which becomes the brain and spinal cord, closes about four weeks after conception, often before a woman knows she is pregnant.

That is why the healthiest time to change your environment is before a positive test, for both partners.



A BUCKET, NOT A SINGLE CAUSE

Lowering the total load

I think of the body as a bucket. Chemicals from plastics and fragrance, residues on food, poor air, poor sleep, and chronic stress each add a little. Your liver, kidneys, gut, lymph, and skin keep draining it.

Problems tend to appear when the bucket fills faster than it empties. Biomonitoring studies have found dozens of industrial chemicals in umbilical cord blood, which tells us exposures in a parent can reach a developing baby.

No single swap protects a pregnancy. What helps is lowering the total load steadily, so your body has room to do its work.

> Replace one product. Change one habit. Clear one room. That is how a healthier home is built.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Start where it is easiest

Each chapter pairs a short explanation with a checklist. Mark what you already do. Choose one or two new items each week.

- **Replace as you go.** When a product runs out, choose a cleaner one instead of throwing everything away at once.
- **Prioritize daily exposures.** What you drink, eat, breathe, and put on your skin every day matters more than what you use once a year.
- **Include your partner.** Sperm quality responds to the same environment, and so does the home you will share with your baby.

Small, steady changes add up to a very different environment within a few months.



CHAPTER TWO

Water and Food

What you drink and eat every day is the largest and most controllable part of your environment.

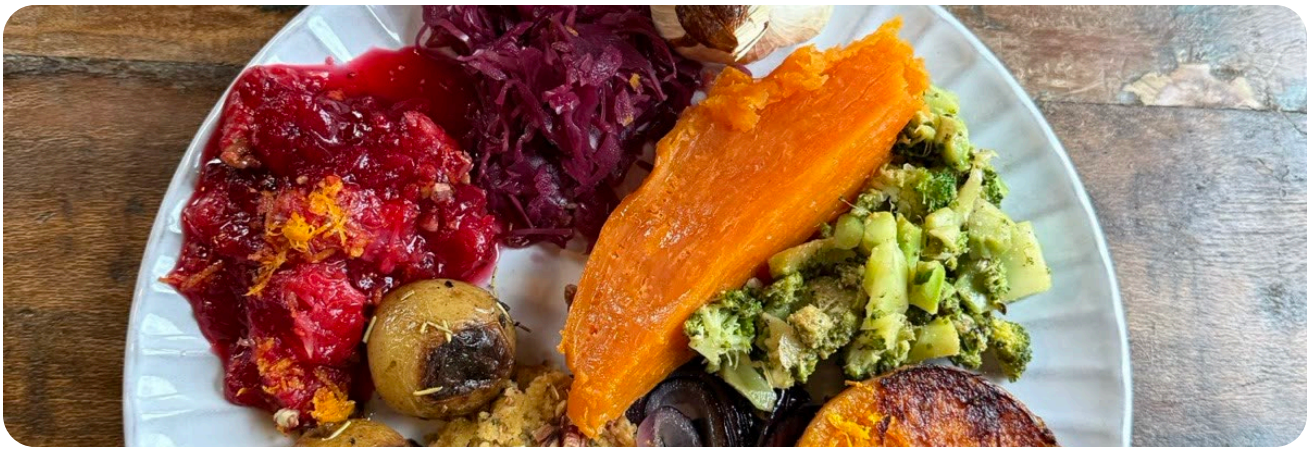


DRINKING WATER

Filter what you drink most

Municipal water is treated for germs, yet it can still carry disinfection byproducts, traces of metals from older pipes, and other contaminants. Utilities publish a yearly water quality report, and private wells deserve regular testing.

- [ ] Drink filtered water whenever possible.
- [ ] Carry a reusable stainless steel or glass water bottle.
- [ ] Use filtered water for coffee and tea.
- [ ] Use filtered water when preparing infant formula in the future, if appropriate.
- [ ] Change water filters according to manufacturer recommendations.
- [ ] Stay well hydrated throughout the day.



FOOD CHOICES

Color, variety, and fewer residues

In diet intervention studies, families who switched to organically grown food showed lower levels of pesticide residues in their urine within about a week. The body clears many of these compounds quickly once intake drops.

- [ ] Choose whole, minimally processed foods most often.
- [ ] Eat a variety of colorful vegetables daily, and fruit every day.
- [ ] Wash produce thoroughly before eating.
- [ ] Purchase organically grown produce when practical, especially produce known to carry higher pesticide residues.
- [ ] Minimize ultra-processed foods, and reduce artificial colors, flavors, and preservatives whenever practical.



NOURISHING FOR TWO

Building materials for a new life

A future pregnancy draws on what you store now. A plate built around quality protein, healthy fats, and plenty of plants supplies the raw materials for egg quality, hormone production, and the earliest stages of development.

- [ ] Prioritize quality protein sources at every meal.
- [ ] Include healthy fats with meals, including omega-3 rich foods.
- [ ] Eat folate-rich greens, beans, and lentils often.
- [ ] Keep blood sugar steady with regular, balanced meals.

Ask your clinician about a prenatal vitamin with folate months before conception, since the neural tube forms so early.



CHAPTER THREE

The Kitchen

Heat, wear, and time are what move chemicals from containers and cookware into food.



FOOD STORAGE

Glass over plastic, especially with heat

Some plastics contain bisphenols and phthalates, compounds that can interact with hormone signaling. Heat, fat, acidity, and scratches all increase how much moves from plastic into food.

- [ ] Replace plastic food containers with glass over time.
- [ ] Avoid heating food in plastic containers.
- [ ] Store leftovers in glass whenever practical.
- [ ] Use stainless steel or glass water bottles.
- [ ] Replace damaged plastic containers as they wear.

Glass jars from the pantry make excellent free storage.



COOKWARE

Durable pans for the years ahead

Many nonstick coatings have been made with fluorinated chemicals, some of which persist in the body for years. A scratched or flaking surface is the clearest sign a pan should be retired.

- [ ] Replace scratched nonstick cookware as needed.
- [ ] Consider stainless steel, cast iron, or other durable cookware for future purchases.
- [ ] Replace damaged cooking utensils over time.
- [ ] Avoid cooking with cookware that is heavily worn.

Cast iron and stainless steel last for decades, which also makes them one of the most affordable choices over time.



KITCHEN HABITS

The simplest protective habit is cooking

When you prepare food at home, you choose the ingredients, the oils, the containers, and the portions. That one habit quietly removes many exposures at once.

- [ ] Prepare meals at home regularly.
- [ ] Wash fruits and vegetables.
- [ ] Store healthy foods where they are easy to see.
- [ ] Plan meals before grocery shopping.
- [ ] Reduce food waste by preparing leftovers.

A weekly plan also lowers stress, which matters as much as anything on your plate.



CHAPTER FOUR

Personal Care and Cleaning

Your skin and your lungs meet these products every day, so they are worth choosing with care.



PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

Replace one product at a time

Products that stay on the skin all day, such as lotion, deodorant, and cosmetics, matter more than products that rinse off quickly. Start there.

- [ ] Shampoo
- [ ] Conditioner
- [ ] Body wash
- [ ] Lotion
- [ ] Facial moisturizer
- [ ] Toothpaste
- [ ] Sunscreen
- [ ] Deodorant
- [ ] Cosmetics

As products become empty, choose simpler formulas with shorter ingredient lists and no added fragrance.



HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS

Simpler ingredients, open windows

Cleaning sprays release fine droplets and vapors that you breathe while you work. Simpler products, good ventilation, and microfiber cloths with warm water handle most everyday cleaning.

- [ ] Laundry detergent
- [ ] Dish soap
- [ ] Dishwasher detergent
- [ ] Multi-surface cleaner
- [ ] Bathroom cleaner
- [ ] Hand soap
- [ ] Glass cleaner

As products need replacing, choose ones with simpler ingredient profiles whenever practical.



FRAGRANCE

Fresh air is the best freshener

In the United States, the word fragrance on a label can stand for a blend of many undisclosed ingredients, because scent formulas are treated as proprietary and need not be listed. Some fragrance blends contain phthalates, which help a scent last.

Consider reducing unnecessary fragrance from:

- ☐ Laundry products
- ☐ Air fresheners
- ☐ Candles
- ☐ Body sprays
- ☐ Perfumes
- ☐ Cleaning products

Fresh air is one of the healthiest ways to freshen your home.



CHAPTER FIVE

Air and Plastic

Most of us spend most of our lives indoors, so the air inside matters more than the air outside.



INDOOR AIR

Ventilate, filter, and keep it dry

Levels of some pollutants indoors are often two to five times higher than outdoors. Moisture is the other key factor: keeping indoor humidity between about 30 and 50 percent and drying leaks within 24 to 48 hours helps prevent mold growth.

- [ ] Open windows regularly when weather allows.
- [ ] Replace HVAC filters on schedule.
- [ ] Address water leaks promptly.
- [ ] Control indoor humidity.
- [ ] Vacuum and dust regularly.
- [ ] Avoid smoking indoors.
- [ ] Increase natural ventilation whenever possible.



PLASTIC REDUCTION

Fewer single-use plastics

Plastics shed tiny particles as they age, and heat speeds the movement of some compounds from plastic into food and water. Reducing single-use plastic lowers daily exposure and waste at the same time.

- [ ] Carry reusable shopping bags.
- [ ] Use reusable food containers.
- [ ] Use reusable water bottles.
- [ ] Reduce disposable plastics whenever practical.
- [ ] Avoid leaving bottled water in hot vehicles.

Glass jars, stainless bottles, and cloth bags are simple, lasting replacements.



A NOTE ON DUST

Why vacuuming is a health habit

Household dust collects flame retardants from furniture and electronics, residues from shoes, and particles from aging plastics. Toddlers who play on the floor take in more dust than adults, which is one more reason to start these habits early.

- **Shoes off at the door** keeps outdoor residues outside.
- **A vacuum with a HEPA filter** traps fine particles instead of blowing them back into the room.
- **Damp dusting** captures dust rather than spreading it.

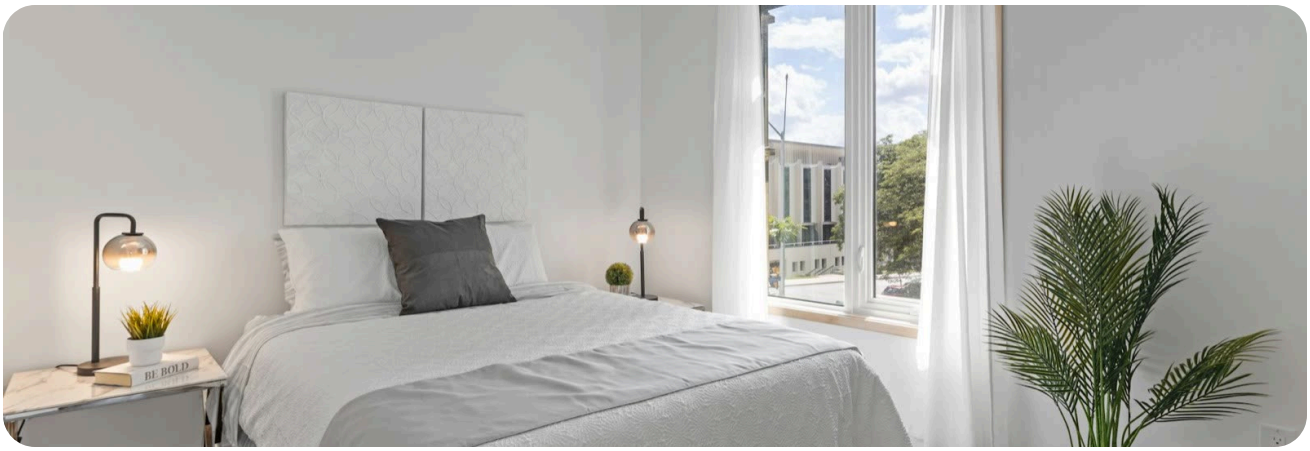
These habits cost almost nothing and protect every member of the household.



CHAPTER SIX

Sleep, Movement, and Connection

A healthy environment includes the rhythm of your days and the emotional climate of your home.



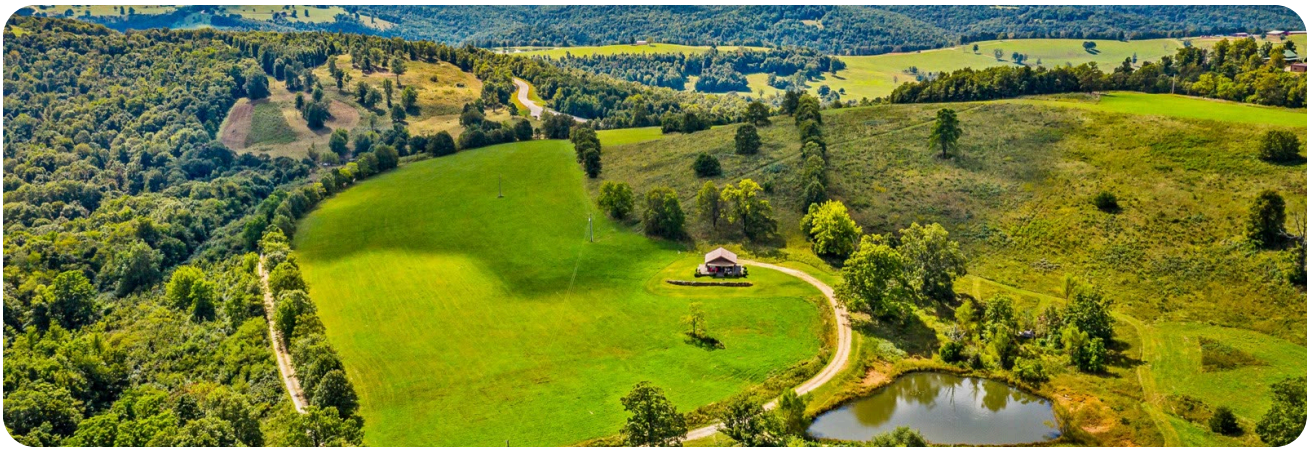
SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

Darkness supports your hormones

Melatonin is present in the fluid surrounding a developing egg, where research suggests it acts as a protective antioxidant. Darkness at night supports melatonin release, and light at night suppresses it.

- [ ] Cool bedroom
- [ ] Dark room
- [ ] Comfortable bedding
- [ ] Consistent bedtime
- [ ] Limited screens before sleep
- [ ] Quiet environment

A regular sleep and wake time steadies the clocks that also time your cycle.



MOVEMENT ENVIRONMENT

Make movement the easy choice

Regular movement improves insulin sensitivity, circulation, lymph flow, mood, and sleep, all of which support fertility and a healthy pregnancy. The simplest way to move more is to make it convenient.

- [ ] Walking shoes easily accessible.
- [ ] Home exercise space.
- [ ] Stretching area.
- [ ] Resistance bands or weights available.
- [ ] Encourage movement breaks throughout the day.

Time outdoors adds daylight, which helps set your daily rhythm.



EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Calm is part of the environment

Chronic stress raises cortisol and shifts the nervous system toward fight or flight, which can affect sleep, blood sugar, and cycle regularity. A home that feels safe and connected is protective.

- [ ] Eat meals together.
- [ ] Reduce unnecessary conflict.
- [ ] Prioritize meaningful conversations.
- [ ] Laugh often.
- [ ] Spend time outdoors together.
- [ ] Practice gratitude.
- [ ] Create technology-free family time.



WEEKLY HOME CHECK

What one improvement can I make this week?

Each weekend, choose one room and one change. Write it down, then check it off.

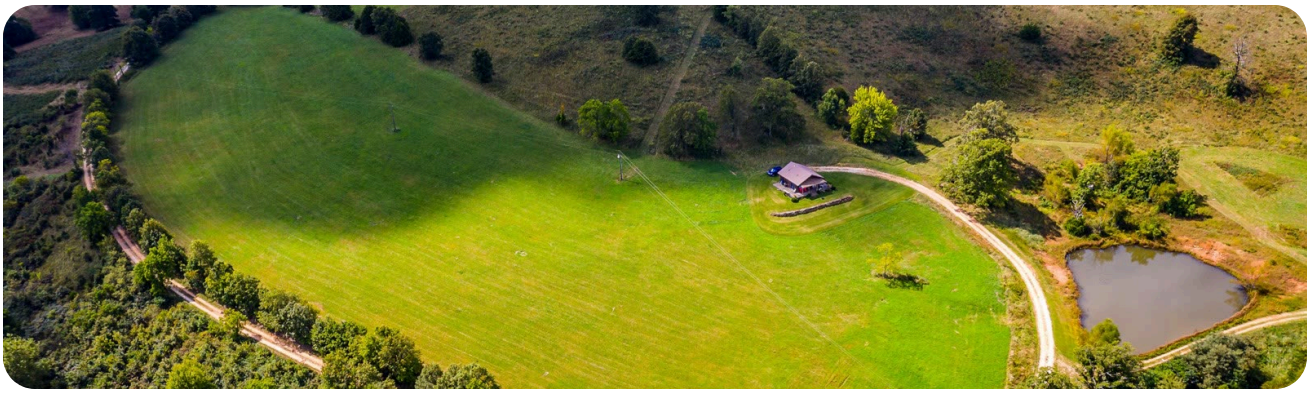
- ☐ Kitchen: _____
- ☐ Bathroom: _____
- ☐ Bedroom: _____
- ☐ Laundry room: _____
- ☐ Living room: _____
- ☐ Vehicle: _____
- ☐ Office: _____
- ☐ Outdoor space: _____



QUICK REFERENCE

The ten highest priority changes

- [ ] Filter your drinking and cooking water.
- [ ] Eat colorful whole foods; choose organic for high-residue produce.
- [ ] Store and reheat food in glass, never in plastic.
- [ ] Retire scratched nonstick pans.
- [ ] Swap leave-on personal care products first.
- [ ] Remove added fragrance from laundry, candles, and air fresheners.
- [ ] Ventilate daily and keep humidity between 30 and 50 percent.
- [ ] Shoes off at the door; vacuum with a HEPA filter.
- [ ] Sleep in a cool, dark room at a consistent time.
- [ ] Make these changes together with your partner.



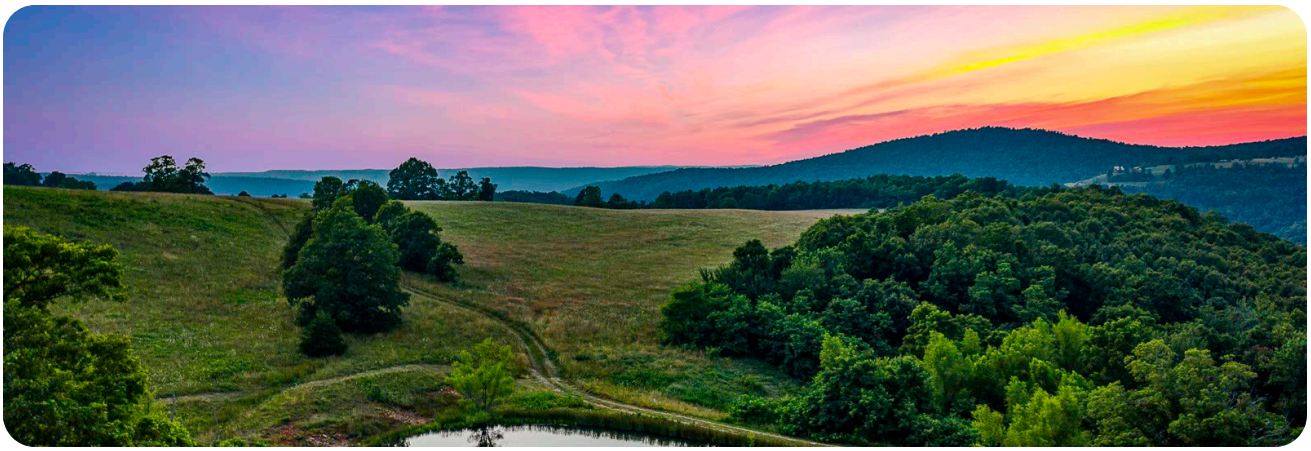
MY CLINICAL LENS

What I look at before a pregnancy

A healthier home lowers the load. Testing shows what your body is already carrying and what it needs. Before conception, I often look at:

- Ferritin and iron status, vitamin D, B12, and folate
- A full thyroid panel with thyroid antibodies
- Fasting insulin and glucose
- Omega-3 status and inflammatory markers
- Toxic burden, including mold, when the history suggests it
- Nervous system regulation, sleep, and stress physiology

Both partners benefit from this look upstream.



REMEMBER

You are not trying to create a perfect home.

You are creating a healthier home.
One thoughtful decision.
One product.
One habit.
One room.
One week at a time.

Over the coming months, these small improvements become the environment in which your future family will grow, thrive, and create memories together.

That is the true purpose of environmental health.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Leila Doolittle



Dr. Leila Doolittle is a Doctor of Chiropractic practicing Functional Medicine and Functional Neurology. She is the founder and lead clinician of Resonance Wellness and the host of The Resonant Life Podcast.

Her work brings together extended laboratory testing, comprehensive functional neurological exams, NeuroQuant brain imaging, and a deep respect for the body as one connected system. She looks for the contributing root causes beneath symptoms, from toxic burden and the gut to the endocrine and nervous systems.

Raised on an Ozark farm, she now spends much of her time on the land she loves, where she is building Resonant Ranch, a place where the land itself is part of the medicine.

This guide is for education. It is not a substitute for individual care. Please consult your own clinician before making changes, especially if you are pregnant, trying to conceive, nursing, or managing a health condition.



YOUR NEXT STEP

Schedule Your Comprehensive Functional Neurological Exam Today.

Book your Comprehensive Functional Medicine Eval/Neurological Exam today to discover what the contributing root causes are that are underlying your health concerns.

Telehealth, Dallas, and Compton

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