Jessica Zadeh: Before Birth

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IN THIS EPISODE

Functional prenatal and postpartum nutritionist Jessica Zadeh is in the third trimester of her first pregnancy. She joins Dr. Elliot Berlin, DC to talk about preparing for birth, navigating body changes, and her approach to wellness during pregnancy. Part 1: before birth.

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DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Welcome to the Informed Pregnancy and Parenting Podcast. I'm your host, pregnancy-focused chiropractor Dr. Elliott Berlin. My guest today is a functional prenatal and postpartum nutritionist. She currently has a nutrition masterclass streaming on Informed Pregnancy Plus. She joins me today in her third trimester of her first pregnancy, Jessica Zadeh. Welcome to the podcast.

JESSICA ZADEH: Thank you so much for having me.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I'm excited to learn from you. I've always run away from because I like pizza, but it's important for me to learn this and I'm open. You caught me at a good time and I've had the luxury and joy of working with you. And I really appreciate your approach before we jump into the details. Let's start at the beginning. Where are you from originally?

JESSICA ZADEH: I'm originally from Connecticut, but trees, yes. Trees, humidity, nature seasons, but yeah, moved to LA for college in 2003, which seems like five years ago, but it's like a really long time ago.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, Connecticut to Los Angeles. I mean, why for college?

JESSICA ZADEH: So I was born in Connecticut, lived there for a really long time, then went to junior high and high school outside Minneapolis in a suburb outside Minneapolis. Minnesota. Minnesota. Yes, exactly. More nature, more seasons.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: More seasons or less seasons. Minnesota seems like only winter and the 4th of July.

JESSICA ZADEH: Winter and then really, really hot and humid. There's like one nice day in October and then there's like one nice day in May, if it's not snowing, but yeah, but you can get a house there for under $2 million. So I think that's why people stay.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, you know, that seems nice.

JESSICA ZADEH: Yeah, it seems nice, but no, I moved to LA for college because I guess the long and short of it was to get away from my mother. Oh, well, I want to know about that. Where do we start?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Where do you start? Okay, let's start there. So you're living outside Minneapolis and you're not loving it. Why?

JESSICA ZADEH: No, I mean, like I had a very idyllic childhood in the sense that like I didn't want for anything. It was very, you know, like upper middle class. Like everyone's mom had a Volvo station wagon. Like in that sense, like it was great, but I had, I still have a mother. She's still alive. I have a mother who has borderline narcissistic personality disorder. So the way I always explain it in the short term is if you've ever seen the movie Mommy Dearest, literally that, and she, there you go. Yep.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: No wire hangers.

JESSICA ZADEH: And she was very, very rigid about food and bodies and put me in dance class and figure skating when I was very young, which I loved, but doesn't exactly help foster healthy environment with your body and around food. So my way to cope with this, which I later learned in college, so studying child development, you know, try to fix yourself by learning about it, I became very controlling about my food in my body. So I developed just a myriad of disordered eating habits starting when I was probably around like age four was my earliest memory of it. And it just kind of grew and, you know, became exacerbated from there. So by the time I got to college, I had a full blown eating disorder and a slew of health issues that I wouldn't really go on

JESSICA ZADEH: to rectify until my early thirties.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay. This is important because as a nutritionist, it sounds like this laid a lot of the groundwork for the work that you do now. Just clarify for me, dance class and figure skating. What about that was off putting to you?

JESSICA ZADEH: So I loved it. It was the only kind of sports I really liked. It wasn't like a soccer or basketball, like team sport kind of person really. But I had, I guess, kind of the best examples. Like I had this one dance coach and I was in tap ballet and jazz and her name was Rebecca with a K. And this was like the early nineties. She would just walk around with a diet coke and a cigarette and she would make us stand up against the wall with like a yardstick. And she would put a yardstick against our stomach to make us like suck in our stomach. And you are taught to be very, very conscious of your body, what it looks like, what it looks like in comparison to other girls and how it's supposed to look and how you're supposed

JESSICA ZADEH: to fit in certain costumes. And like I was literally told, if you eat Oreos, you will get fat. And you will never get married. No one will ever love you. So things like that do not.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, if you eat enough Oreos, you probably will get fat, whatever your choices, what does that have to do with never getting married or nobody loving you? Ouch.

JESSICA ZADEH: I don't remember the exact conversation, but I remember that, you know, kind of like snippet of it, but it does.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Did mom put you in these classes for the yardstick?

JESSICA ZADEH: Yes and no. Well, so here's the other, my mother and I have many differences, but one of the biggest is that we are just very polar opposite. I'm five, eight. I'm built like my dad. I'm very muscular. I have a very big bone mass. My mother is about five feet tall, like German little woman, maybe a hundred pounds at the time. And she was just very, very athletic. And I just was not. And so because that was a difference in her eyes, it was something wrong with me that needed to be fixed because I just wasn't like that. So that was kind of, uh, cause on my mother's side, my grandfather is Austrian and that kind of mentality, it's sort of like a tough love mentality.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, that's even without the narcissistic personality. I can only imagine how much more intense that became. Also, I think I didn't take dance because they would have needed a two yard stick.

JESSICA ZADEH: Yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay. Back to you. So you moved to California to get away from that environment.

JESSICA ZADEH: Yeah. You know, I've always thought of myself as kind of a spiritual intuitive person. And I just had this feeling that the only way I was going to, like, there had to be something more in the sense that like I was just in this cycle with my mother and I just felt like, and I had cousins in Hermosa beach and it was like the furthest place away that I did get into a school here and it was kind of like my safety school. And so I transferred and I was like, okay, well, I got into a school there. I have a cousin kind of in the area if I like need anyone. And so I was like, this is my only option kind of. So yeah, moved here, came to school, studied applied developmental psychology, basically to, you know,

JESSICA ZADEH: learn about why I was so messed up about so many things and initially became a teacher and a newborn care specialist. And I was a nanny for a while. I worked at a baby store on the weekends and I was very heavily into the early childhood development area and worked in that for a really long time up until like 2017 ish.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: What changed?

JESSICA ZADEH: What changed was my wedding. Actually, I got married in 2017 and actually I saw my mother at my wedding. She was invited to my wedding, long story. And the year after my wedding, I gained 80 pounds and this was while I was still going to SoulCycle multiple times a week. I basically would like not eat during the week and then binge on the weekend, but then do like crazy

HIIT workouts, which does not foster weight loss, by the way, for anyone listening. It just creates a lot of excess cortisol in your body and adrenal fatigue and messes with your hormones. And it just does really bad stuff. So I was at an in-service with Dr. Bill Sears, the pediatrician. This was literally a year after my wedding and

JESSICA ZADEH: he was talking about how he was diagnosed with stage four colon cancer in the early 2000s. And he was seeing doctors at UCSF, I believe. And I think they gave him like four to six months to live, something like that. And he and his wife decided that if he has four to six months to live, that they were just going to travel, enjoy their time. But he said at the end of the day, I'm a scientist and I can't stop researching things. So while they were in the Mediterranean and Spain, he started speaking with these other clinicians about his cancer and they recommended all these alternative healing modalities. And he thought, well, I'm going to die anyway, so why not just try it? And most of it was nutrition based.

JESSICA ZADEH: And so he completely rehabbed his diet, stopped eating everything, non-fat, low fat, processed, started eating really high, healthy fats, unprocessed foods. Obviously a lot of other stuff went into it too. But the long and short of it was this was in 2018 and he was still alive and his doctors at UCSF were like, well, this is weird. So he talks about how it changed the way he practiced medicine. And he started getting in a lot of trouble with the American Academy of Pediatrics because he started saying, no, you shouldn't give your kids fruit loops for breakfast. You should be giving them eggs and whole milk and raw dairy and all this stuff. And so sitting there, I was kind of at the end of my rope in terms of food and

JESSICA ZADEH: being at the beginning of my marriage, I knew then I wanted to have children someday. And I kind of just was at this point where like, okay, I have to figure this food stuff out because if I don't, I'm going to pass it on to my children one day. Anyway, so the long and short of it is I bought one of his books and I went home and I told my husband, I'm quitting my job. I'm going back to school to study nutrition. He was like, okay. And so I always kind of say like, you know, the therapists that become therapists to solve their own issues. I kind of did that with food. So right when I started, when I went back to school, I did a sugar detox. I started seeing a functional medicine doctor, started getting my hormones figured out my cortisol

JESSICA ZADEH: levels, completely changed the way I ate, lost a hundred pounds and became a functional nutrition practitioner. And that's what I do now.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, you say it just like, Oh, lost a hundred pounds. It's not like a massive.

JESSICA ZADEH: Well, it took a long time. It did take three years, which kind of, and I'm skipping a little bit ahead, but that's one of the issues that I would say the biggest issue I'm having in my pregnancy is that it took me effectively 37 ish years to get to a place with my body where I actually was comfortable with my body and I liked my body and I was good with food and all this stuff. And then I got pregnant and thrown a whole wrench into it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So, okay. Well, that'll be interesting. And God, my mind is racing with how did your mom get here?

JESSICA ZADEH: Wedding.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: If you didn't invite her, how long had it been since you had seen her? What happened at the wedding? What happened since the wedding? But I really want to get into your pregnancy. So let's take a break. When we come back, we'll talk bumps and bellies. We'll be right back. Welcome back. We're talking to Jessica's a pre and postnatal functional nutritionist. Okay. So pregnancy for you, you're in the throes of it. Now, how has the pregnancy been for you so far?

JESSICA ZADEH: So I've been kind of separating it because I guess if you're asking me from a clinical perspective, I'm having what they call a non-eventful or it's very good. Clinically speaking, it's very a boring pregnancy, a boring pregnancy. Yes. Emotionally, psychologically, I've been having a rough time because like I said, before I got pregnant, I would walk five miles a day, go to Pilates every day. I was in very good shape. I mean, I still am in very good shape. I shouldn't say that what's been hard for me is and you would think that I know this because I do this for a living and I talk about this with my OB all the time and he just looks at me like, yeah, because you're pregnant. I kind of thought that I had gotten my body to a

JESSICA ZADEH: place where if I continued to, you know, eat 200 grams of protein a day and eat very specifically and work out every day that I would just have like that quintessential perfect little baby bump. But my body just, I guess is not like that. So, yeah, that's been really hard for me. The weight gain part has just really been psychologically tough and I think it's a mixture of eating disorder stuff being brought up. I think it's a mixture of having been this weight previously and lost it. And then it's also a mixture of a little bit of the fear of like, even though I help other women get their weight off, there are some people that breastfeed and they have a much harder time with it. So it's kind of all of that. And just watching my body

JESSICA ZADEH: change so much has been a lot.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay. So it's not like you're having like mega stuffed Oreos as the mainstay of your pregnancy.

JESSICA ZADEH: No, in fact, I really have it in probably people listening to this who are pregnant are going to like hate me. Honestly, my biggest craving has been raw, full fat cottage cheese, which is like super lame.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You glutton.

JESSICA ZADEH: I know. Like nothing. Like, I don't know. It's been my diet. It's a very, very intentional and specific with my diet. I think twice when I was, I didn't ever even have morning sickness. I never threw up nothing twice when I was really, really nauseous. I made my husband go to Gelson's and get me a Mexican seven up for people that don't know what that is. It's seven up manufactured in Mexico without corn syrup. So they use actual real cane sugar versus corn syrup. That was kind of like the worst thing.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You reference a couple of times eating disordery kind of things.

JESSICA ZADEH: Yes. So for me, I mean, and people are kind of all over the map on this. So there's kind of a differentiation in the clinical world of eating disorder treatment between eating disorder behaviors or symptoms, meaning are you restricting? Are you binging? Are you purging? That kind of thing. And just eating disorder thought patterns. So for me, I haven't engaged in any type of eating disorder symptom or behavior in many years. For me, what tends to creep back in are the thought patterns. So what I mean by that is just really being very, very hard on my body, in my head. And I think I also struggle with the reality of what my body looks like to other people versus what it looks like to me. And I guess a prime example of this is my

JESSICA ZADEH: baby shower was a couple of weeks ago, and I had a little bit of a mental breakdown because of people taking my picture. I didn't want my picture taken because I'm so uncomfortable with where my body is at this point. It just brought up so much anxiety and I just got emotional about it. I didn't want it. And my husband came at the very end and people were lingering and my husband's family is all Persian Israeli, so they stay a very long time. And I looked at my husband and I was like, I can't do this anymore. I need to leave. I'm out, like I'm done. It was just too much, like people trying to touch my belly and people saying, oh, you look great or whatever it was. It was just too much focus on my body and it got me too in my head about it.

JESSICA ZADEH: And it's a hard thing to explain. I don't know if I'm articulating it well, but well, one thing

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: that's not so hard is if you don't feel good with how you look, you don't want to be the center of attention. You certainly don't want to be the center of attention with cameras flashing.

JESSICA ZADEH: Right. Yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I think we can all relate to that when you had your eating disorders, how did they manifest themselves?

JESSICA ZADEH: So I was kind of all over the map. I guess if you look at like my medical history, I was bulimic. I also had a diagnosis called EDNOS, which now they've changed it. But back in the day, it stood for eating disorder, not otherwise specified, meaning you kind of fluctuated between restricting, binging, purging, all of the above. So I was kind of all over the map. I'm very lucky in the sense that I don't have crazy medical issues because of it. I guess the biggest one that's impacted me in pregnancy is I had a couple of esophageal ruptures, meaning my esophagus ruptured a couple of times and I had to have surgeries to fix it. And then I had hiatal hernia repairs because where the esophagus connects to your stomach, it becomes very,

JESSICA ZADEH: very worn out. So they have to go in and suture it and basically make it stronger again. So that's something that in the third trimester, like anything I eat, which I don't really have an appetite right now, which is another subject, but like I can have two cups of bone broth and I get heartburn because of like where the baby's physician pushing on my esophagus. It's kind of agitating all that tissue. So that would be kind of the biggest medical complication I guess I had. In that sense, I'm very lucky. I have a lot of dental stuff, but other than that.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Dental stuff from nutrient deprivation?

JESSICA ZADEH: No, from purging for 30 years. So I don't really have any like enamel on the backs of my teeth, which if you're someone like me, who's like weird about fluoride and stuff like that, it's a whole thing.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: But now you're towards the end.

JESSICA ZADEH: Yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Is that feeling better or worse? I mean, obviously you're going to be getting as big as you'll get. So if you weren't happy with how big you were a month ago, it's probably not happier in the sense of you must have grown, but are you happier knowing that it's a finite period and you're getting to the end of that finite period?

JESSICA ZADEH: Yes, that does make me happy. Now if you couldn't tell I'm a little high strung, a little OCD and anxious. So now my anxiety has shifted more into because I am having a girl and having a daughter just brings a lot of anxiety for me and my worst fear is passing this all along to her. So now my anxiety kind of has shifted that way. And I have some anxiety about the delivery, more so about the hospital, I guess. Yeah, I guess to answer your question. Yes, it's dissipating, but it's kind of shifted to different anxieties.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: OK, I think that observationally in the work that I do and especially the work that I've done in the past supporting labor, it seems to me most people go into labor with some kind of combination of excitement and anxiousness. And so the ratio could be different from person to person or even for the same person from time to time as you get closer. And the things that you're excited or anxious about could also vary. I'm curious what you have planned, especially if your anxiety, part of it has to do with being in a hospital setting. Let's take a little break and when we come back, we'll find out what birth you have in store. Welcome back. We're talking to Jessica Zadeh. She is excited and anxious about becoming a mom in six weeks.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: How much of that is about becoming a mom? And how much is it about body stuff? And how much is it about birth?

JESSICA ZADEH: I would say pretty equally split. I mean, as far as becoming a parent, I think, you know, a lot of people have asked me why I've waited this long. It's one, I've been married for almost eight years, two, I'm 39. So I have waited a long time to do this. And I think the answer to that is twofold. One, I worked with children for a really long time, so I kind of OD'd a little bit. Needed a break.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You peaked early.

JESSICA ZADEH: I peaked early, yeah. And when you do study child development and you work, and I'm sure other people who are educators or, you know, work with little kids can attest to this. When you really learn how severely you can just mess up a human being, it makes you a little more trepidatious, I guess, to just jump into it. And I'm sure a lot of my own childhood issues played into that as well. I was very kind of gun shy. Like, oh, God, like, OK, if I do this, like, am I going to be too good? Anyways, there's all that.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, now you make me want to go back and ask all the questions I have in the first segment. You moved away from your mom intentionally, but it sounds like the relationship actually became even more intentionally distant.

JESSICA ZADEH: Yes. So after I moved away for college, I had a therapist when I was in college. She was in Westwood. She was amazing. And she gave me the really good advice. I think I was maybe 24 at the time, 23, 24. And she essentially told me in her experience with this type of dynamic, if one person does not just sever the relationship, you kind of just end up in this hamster wheel of whatever it is, dysfunction for, you know, the rest of time, essentially. So I was told essentially if you don't sever ties, that it's just going to keep going in the cycle. So I stopped speaking with my mother when I was 24, 25. And then the long story short, when I was planning my wedding, like I said, my husband's family is Persian-Israeli.

JESSICA ZADEH: And the long and short answer of it is that I was told by my father-in-law that my mother was expected to be there. So it was that dynamic. And then also my grandparents wouldn't come if she didn't come. My father wouldn't come if she didn't come. So it was kind of like wasn't really my choice, but she came. So when I saw her when I got married, which was in 2017, that was the first time I had seen her in, I don't know, I was 32 when I got married. So seven years, I guess.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And no contact at all during that time? No. Well, what was it like to see her?

JESSICA ZADEH: Well, that's kind of a funny story. I can laugh about it now. I was so anxious about it. I had a wedding planner who had these three other women come and, you know, they follow you around with your lip gloss and everything. And this one girl, she followed me around and I gave her a bottle of Ativan and a case of duck horn Sauvignon Blanc and said, make sure I have this at all times. And I, to this day, do not remember anything from my wedding because I was high on Ativan and drinking Sauvignon Blanc all day. And that's how I coped with it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. That's your wedding.

JESSICA ZADEH: That's my wedding. So I also did not want video because at the time, this whole concept of me not wanting photos and videos taken of me is deeply rooted. It's not like a new thing. I did have a photographer there. And there are some really funny photos that he got of me where I just look like completely just a mess. I mean, people took videos, you know, but we instructed the photographer to, you know, she's not to be near me. The rabbi was very conscientious of the situation, and he didn't mention my mother at all. She wasn't even at our Ketubah signing.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, narcissistic leaning people don't generally like that.

JESSICA ZADEH: No, they don't. So she did have a mild outburst at the end of my wedding, which I do not remember. But one of my good friends was my roommate in college, witnessed and replayed the whole situation for me. And yeah, so she did have a little outburst at the end. But then, yeah, that was in 2017 and we haven't spoken since.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So that was it. Just the one that was it. The one one random night that you have to get married. That's when you saw her. And that was it. I say, so she's out.

JESSICA ZADEH: Yeah, but ironically, she has two sisters who are my aunts who I have a very close relationship with. And I have a relationship with my grandparents or her parents. And I have somewhat of a relationship with my dad, but it's hard because he's kind of under her.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So, yeah, wow. OK, so why would you be nervous about becoming a parent?

JESSICA ZADEH: Because I've had such great examples.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So that's understandable. That's one third of the nervous pie.

JESSICA ZADEH: Yes, that's one third of it. I would say the other third of it is, you know, just the normal stuff like how what is work going to look like after, you know, I don't know, how are we going to afford to pay for private school? Like stuff like that, like that kind of minutiae. And then the other anxiety part, I guess, is just about the delivery, which we did our Cedars tour the other day a couple weeks ago now, I guess. And I said to my husband, I'm very fortunate because you connect me with Stacey, who's my doula. And I said to my husband, I don't know how people do this if they don't have all the kind of support that I've put in place. I feel like it would be so much more anxiety provoking.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, yeah, I mean, I think so, too, for people that want it anyway. You know, the old saying takes a village and we don't know everybody has the village accessible. It's challenging. So your plan is hospital birth with an obstetrician.

JESSICA ZADEH: Yes, actually, you recommended Dr. Rothbard to me, too, I think. So, yeah, I switched my OBGYN who I had for, I don't know, 15 years. I started OBGYN shopping, I guess, if you will, probably about a year and a half ago. And my old OBGYN, she did some stuff during COVID I wasn't a fan of, so interviewed a lot of people and ended up going with Jason Rothbard. And the reason I ended up going with him is because in my interview with him, he was actually the last OB that I interviewed, too. And I kind of went in and I was kind of just over the whole process. I was getting very frustrated with it because I was getting, I guess, frustrated with the answers I was getting from doctors. And I kind of went in there not in a mean way,

JESSICA ZADEH: just very much like, OK, this is who I am. Like this is what I want. This is what I don't want. And I was very surprised, but very pleased with his answers. And I think one of the things I said to him is I said, you know, I will not do the gestational diabetes test. I won't drink the drink. I will do blood spot monitoring, but that's all I'll do. And he just looked at me and he said, OK, it's your body. You can do what you want. And I was like floored by that kind of that, which is kind of sad if you think about it, because I feel like all doctors really should say that. But yeah, he was just very accommodating, I guess, which I feel like all doctors should be. And I think a good balance to I tend to be a little, again, high strung.

JESSICA ZADEH: And he's very kind of relaxed about that. So I did know I wanted to deliver in hospital, I think, because I don't think home birth would be right for me because I have so many anxiety and I would be worrying about what could go wrong and that kind of thing. And because I am at advanced gestational, I think I did want to be in an environment where God forbid something did happen. I, you know, had the tools that are available. So, yes, hospitals delivery, but I also wanted a very, you know, kind of allopathic light, if you will, environment, which is why I ended up going with

Stacey as my doula because I wanted someone there to be my advocate. I wanted someone there to kind of take the pressure off me so that I didn't have to kind of

JESSICA ZADEH: like run the show. And she's been great in the sense of helping me kind of develop a plan, what I want, what I don't want. And I feel very comfortable with the fact that I can kind of delineate to her and I don't feel like all the pressure has to be on me, if that makes sense.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. So what's the ideal? What's the vision that you're aiming for?

JESSICA ZADEH: So the vision, which is weird, because you think I'd be super adamant about this, but everyone that I've ever known that used to be a newborn care specialist and everyone that I worked with, no, I don't think anyone you would be a good person to vouch for this. I don't think anyone has a birth plan that goes exactly how it's written. So ideally in a perfect mystical world, I would have a completely natural, unmedicated, magical birth and delivery with like no tearing. And it's just this great idyllic experience. I don't know if it will go that way. Ideally, I don't want to have an epidural. I've kind of left that as a question mark on my birth plan in the sense that like let's do everything we can to mitigate that. If it does happen,

JESSICA ZADEH: I'm not going to stress over it. But besides that, I want to be as, I guess, natural as possible. I was laughing with my husband during the hospital tour when they were showing like your food options and I was like, well, this is sad. So like bringing in like that kind of stuff, like whatever I can control, trying to control that. So like bringing in my own foam bath, my own water with, you know, trace minerals and lemon juice and things like that, I think will help me feel more in control of it. But I don't know, at the end of the day, I mean, I don't know, maybe she ends up being breached and I ended up being a C-section and it all goes out the window. So I am kind of surrendered to that as much as I feel like I can be.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Right. Well, that's why. So, you know, what are you aiming for for page one? What's the ideal? And of course, I always say that once labor starts, you're kind of in a hot air balloon aiming for a certain path, but somewhat at the mercy of the winds. Well, I mean, it sounds like a reasonable plan. It sounds like you've built in some flexibility if you need this or that or in the moment want this or that, that you're flexible in terms of getting them and also surrounded yourself with a team, you know, an obstetrician who's pretty open minded and a doula who's got your back and all the ways that I don't got your back. And I'm excited to talk to you on the other side after you have the baby and see how things went for you.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Before we wrap up here, I do want to just find out what because you do functional nutrition for this demographic. So what do those services look like?

JESSICA ZADEH: So kind of depends on where you're at. I work with people who are not pregnant yet, who either they are struggling to get pregnant or they're having fertility issues or they just want to, you know, get off hormonal birth control and prepare their bodies to get pregnant. So I work with women in that space, which is really fun. And also it's fun to kind of see them through that whole journey, depending on kind of where they start. And then I also work with women who are any which were, you know, in their pregnancy. Maybe they were just diagnosed with gestational diabetes. So then they come to see me to, you know, rectify that and work on that or some women come to me

toward the end of their pregnancy and they're concerned about

JESSICA ZADEH: like micronutrient deficiencies and being able to breastfeed. So we work on that. And I work with women in terms of what to eat, obviously, how to optimize their diet and also make it manageable, maintainable with through supplementation, through functional lab testing, which functional lab testing is something I really love because it's kind of like a puzzle to me. And I don't think a lot of allopathic practitioners really like see the value in it. But that's really fun to me because you get to draw a lot of blood, see where the markers are, see what's missing, see what's too high or too low and kind of it's like a mystery. You get to kind of figure it out from there. And then I also see women postpartum who, like I said,

JESSICA ZADEH: maybe they, you know, are breastfeeding and they can't lose weight or maybe they have low milk supply or maybe they're just struggling with nutritional deficiencies, something like that. So kind of all over that spectrum is where I work. So it's fun, because it's a lot of different things, but then it's a lot of, you know, detective work. And it's really fun to kind of see them through that whole journey because you can actually see the improvements and how excited they are and really, you know, you're not just helping them, but you're helping their family. So I really enjoy that part of it too.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's awesome. Are they virtual? Can you do them virtually?

JESSICA ZADEH: Yep, yeah. Yeah, I actually, I started my practice during COVID so I kind of started virtual.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You set up virtual from the beginning.

JESSICA ZADEH: Exactly, yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And you have a really informative masterclass currently running on Informed Pregnancy Plus, a world of information about nutrition, and it's both entertaining and informational. I strongly recommend it. Where can we find you online?

JESSICA ZADEH: My website is Holistic, spelled with a W, so W-H-O-L-I-S-T-I-C, HolisticMethodNutrition.com. And my Instagram is at Holistic.Mama.Nutrition.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: We'll visit you there. Thank you for sharing some difficult topics pretty openly here with me and with the audience, and I am wishing you just a wonderful mind-body experience in the final stages of your pregnancy, birth, and postpartum experience, and look forward to catching up with you on the other side.

JESSICA ZADEH: Thank you.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Thanks, Jessica, and at home, thanks for listening to the Informed Pregnancy Podcast. For more pregnancy and parenting information just like this, visit us online at InformedPregnancy.com. I got a...

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