

LIVING HEALTHY

LOCAL | DR. DANIELA HERMELIN

Doctor focuses on nutrition, exercise

BY DAVID BAUGHER
SPECIAL TO THE JEWISH LIGHT

Dr. Daniela Hermelin of Wellness to Be thinks people are sometimes a bit too quick to turn to prescription medication instead of looking for simpler answers that may be more obvious.

"As a med student, I never had one course in nutrition and I found that to be really strange," she said. "Most of medicine is centered on healing

people through pharmaceutical means."

Hermelin, who runs her business through personal visits to clients, looks to a different approach. She works with patients to improve diet, exercise and stress relief habits in order to boost their overall health and vitality. While pharmaceutical drugs can produce valuable results, she feels it's important not to overlook other components of wellness. Problems from psoriasis to

heart disease to acid reflux can have dietary aspects to treatment.

She said that she began taking coursework in the new field of integrative medicine when she started to see the limitations of purely pharmaceutical methodologies from experiences in her own life. She noted that families often approach her when they have a sense that their eating habits are out-of-balance but they don't have the training to correct the problem

alone.

"Either through intuition or just resistance to conventional therapies they want to try alternative methods of healing themselves," she said. "It's funny to think of food as an alternative method as it's been used for thousands of years but it's coming back around that people are realizing that so many chronic diseases are not being cured. They are only getting worse."



Dr. Hermelin

HERMELIN | PAGE 15

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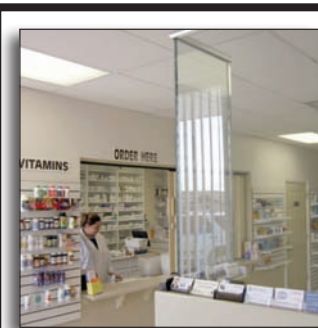
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HERMELIN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

Tell me a little about your business. What sort of alternative methodologies do you look at?

I use diet, exercise and lifestyle changes to prevent problems and help people with their health. For instance, if someone is overweight, they may have difficulty changing their diet. I essentially become their coach. I meet with them and do a medical assessment. It's very comprehensive. It's not just your past medical history but what are the stresses in your life? Then we go into what sorts of meals they eat and examine their foods. Then on the second consultation, I meet with them and put together a wellness guide.

What does that look like?

It's a five- or six-page document that talks about their goals and sets stages based on what the individual wants to accomplish. Essentially, it is a lifelong goal but with weight loss we may have one-, three- and six-month goals. I also put together a diet plan and menu along with a shopping list as well as herbal and vitamin supplements if necessary. There is also exercise and stress relief. It's a very comprehensive, holistic way trying to help a person.

What role do you think conventional medicine plays as opposed to the diet and exercise regimen you focus on?

They play different and essential roles. Conventional and pharmaceutical medicine have a place. I feel grateful to be living in a day and age where we have medicines such as antibiotics but I think they are abused. I think we use pharmaceutical medicine too easily and too readily because it's easy to do. We need to put more work and emphasis on lifestyle and prevention rather than just trying to do a quick, easy solution with a "pop a pill" mentality.

What role has your faith played in what you do?

Being an Orthodox Jew has definitely played a role. First of all, I keep a kosher diet so it helps to understand that there is a relationship between health and spirituality. We understand that we eat in a certain way because it will affect our souls. Some things you just take on faith. You don't know why you are not supposed to eat pig or shrimp. You do it because it's supposed to affect your soul. You want to keep your soul pure and healthy. It's the same with food. It helps to have that analogy.

Dr. Daniela Hermelin

HOME: University City

FAMILY: Married to David with three children

AGE: 31

WEBSITE:

www.wellnesstobemd.com

What about hobbies?

I am a dancer. I love to cook also. It's a very big hobby of mine. One of the things I offer to my clients is cooking classes. I also love shopping for food, going to Whole Foods or Schnucks. I'm a pianist. I love classical music and music in general. I also enjoy reading, gardening and decorating.

What are some simple things people can do in their own lives to improve their health?

One simple thing is to make sure you meet the requirements of fiber in your diet. For a man, that's 38 grams of fiber per day. For a woman, it's 25 grams. If you meet that requirement, you're eating a very healthy diet because fiber is only found in plant-based foods. One medium-sized apple contains five grams of fiber, so you can see it actually takes a lot of food to get to 25 or 38 grams. Doing that, you're eating a very heart-healthy, preventative diet for disease in general.

What sorts of advancements are on the horizon in this field?

There's a lot of study in herbal medicine and even micromedicinals as well as the effects of fungi and their medicinal qualities and protective effects on health. I try not to be esoteric. I'm not one of those who is into trends. I'm more about simple, whole and pure because that's what I really believe. If anything my own trend is going back to pure foods. I think that's the hardest thing that we need to develop today because we live in a generation and a society where we're not set up to eat whole, unprocessed foods.

Is that a trend you're seeing generally?

I see it nationally. I see that there's going to be an emphasis on plant-based foods because of the scare of the amount of saturated fat and cholesterol in animal-based foods and even the scare on how cows and chickens are raised and fed. We're going back to eating more organic and plant-based foods so we can get essential nutrients from what nature intended us to eat. I'm not saying that we're not supposed to eat meat. I'm not proposing a vegetarian diet but I am for adding more plant-based foods to your diet. Most people just don't get enough.

Teaching teachers



Michael Raileanu (above), director of Shaare Shalom Religious School (serving Shaare Zedek, Brith Sholom Kneseth Israel and Traditional Congregation) teaches 'Finding your place in the Tanakh' during the Jewish Education Fair held by Central Agency for Jewish Education on Nov. 1 at Temple Israel. More than 200 congregational educators — adults and teens — took part. At left, Solomon Schechter Day School Religious Studies Director Chani Pinsberg teaches a class on Hebrew Grammar.

Photos: Kristi Foster

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