

WOMEN'S HEALTH

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What work do you do and why did you choose this field?

I work as a GP at Blubird Medical with Dr Daniel Israel, and a great team of female doctors, nurses and receptionists who inspire me daily with their dedication and courage, particularly while we are on the frontline of a pandemic. I didn't ever think I would become a doctor and actually studied a Bachelor of Arts as my undergraduate degree. I was drawn to the biology side of things while pursuing psychology, and while I loved the arts, I knew I wanted to work with people. I was very privileged to study different things I enjoyed, and with medical school I saw the study of the human body as learning Bereishit / Creation - how Hashem created the human body - the myriad of tiny miracles required to make the eye see, the kidneys produce urine, the development of a fetus.

Why is it important for women to practice self-care?

I think women should practice self-care and try create a sustainable infrastructure to protect their mental health. This scaffolding might include a psychologist, life coach, or doctor with whom one develops a good

rapport. If this is in place, then we don't crash as severely (mentally and physically) when life throws us curveballs. This in turn prevents prolonged sick leave from work and prevents relationship strain. Exercise is a must, and we know it releases the feel-good neurotransmitters (endorphins, dopamine, serotonin and noradrenaline) so that we don't need social media notifications to get those dopamine hits.

Mothers (stay-at-home mothers and working mothers) need to identify the tools that will best help them get well and keep them well. For some it might be sleep-training, and for others it might be yoga, mindfulness and meditation.

With Gauteng's rampant third wave of Covid, everyone I meet is taking strain. Please be kind to yourselves and know that nobody has it easy. The Jones's have diarrhoea. OK is the new amazing.

What small practices or actions can women take today to protect their health?

Book that physio/chiro/massage, the one you have been procrastinating. We all bunched our pap smears and

mammograms in 2020 so try catch up this year please. For those of you who are running busy households, don't forget to prioritise your own health appointments while you're booking everyone else's. Ask your parents/siblings about any familial diseases like high cholesterol, Diabetes, Rheumatoid Arthritis, specifics about cancers in the family, and tell your doctors when you go for check-ups so any necessary screening tests can be done.

What Jewish woman (past or present) inspires you and why?

Yael from the Bible: she was a brave warrior in that she managed to kill the wicked king Sisera when the male warriors had failed to. In the gripping story told in Judges, she gives him milk and a blanket to rest in her tent and then once he falls asleep she kills him with a tent peg! I'm a Tarantino fan and she is definitely a Prophetess with timeless Women's Month status.

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