

Brewing in the Coffee Room
Street Closings and Crossing Guards: Our Business or Not?

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Meet Isaac Lakewood's Vitamin Expert

from Refuah Pharmacy



SPOTLIGHT



Meet Isaac

Lakewood's Natural Health Guru

BY SHIMMY BLUM

Few things are as tempting as being told that there is some novel way to solve your health and/or nutrition problem naturally and with no side effects.

That's precisely why approximately five billion dollars a year is spent by consumers on this continent to purchase some 29,000 products related to nutritional and herbal supplements, and other forms of alternative medicine.

These products tout just about every benefit under the sun, with that ubiquitous disclaimer, "This statement has not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration." Who precisely *did* evaluate the product and can honestly vouch as to what it can and cannot accomplish, and whether this is the right remedy for you?

Physicians rarely delve too deeply into the intricacies of alternative medicine. Conventional medical treatment can virtually never be fully replaced by alternative medicine, and no prescription is required for their purchase in any case.

Trust the manufacturer?

With little government oversight and virtually no liability for inaccurate promises, manufacturers are practically free to claim whatever they want.

And they do.

A prominent recent Canadian study, led by Steven G. Newmaster, a biology professor and botanical director of the Biodiversity Institute of Ontario, found that herbal products frequently don't match the labeling. The study tested 44 popular North American supplements, such as Echinacea and St. John's wort, and found that one-third had no trace of the claimed herbs. Others contained lots of cheap, and oftentimes damaging, fillers along with the main herb.

Hence, while shopping for nutritional and herbal supplements may seem as simple as shopping for juice, it is not. Yet, sorting through the clutter to find the right product can have a significant powerful impact on your health and everyday life. >>

Meet Isaac

Lakewood's Natural Health Guru

Tapping into Knowledge

How do you get it right?

More and more by the day, Lakewood residents associate this task with one word: "Isaac."

Isaac Shimanov has been the "face" of nutrition and alternative medicine at Refuah Pharmacy for over 12 years, beginning shortly after the pharmacy opened its doors. During the subsequent years, Refuah has grown into a household name in town, with three branches (East County Line, Madison Avenue and West Gate), with Isaac's presence a fixture in all three throughout the week.

As a reputable certified nutritionist, Isaac was originally handpicked to by Refuah's proprietors to build its alternative medicine department while he lived in Queens. He agreed to their requests and came to live and work in Lakewood.

Customers are all initially impressed by the Uzbeki-

stan-born nutritionist's humility, compassion and very approachable persona. "If I'd ever need help changing my tire at 5:00 a.m., Isaac is the one I'd call," says Shmuly Cohen, a Refuah Pharmacy employee. However, Isaac's compassion is merely the cream on his deep pie of knowledge in health and nutrition. Not only will he never look to sell a product that is not the customer's best choice, but he is also keenly able to decide and guide as to what is ideal.

No less than the leading figures in major nutritional product manufacturers are intrigued by Isaac's understanding of this field. He has forged a particularly close relationship with Eliezer Gruber, CN, of Nutri-Supreme. Mr. Gruber, among others in the field, has spent many hours in conversation with Isaac discussing how to formulate the most effective and useful new products. Yossi, a representative of Maxi-Health and frequent visitor to all of the company's merchants, is known to refer to Isaac as "a treasure in Lakewood's backyard."

In addition to understanding the general benefits of particular vitamins, minerals and herbs — and their ideal dosage and mix — Isaac also has unique knowledge about every single one of the over 2,000 nutritional products on Refuah's store shelves, and the differences between individual brands of similar looking products.

Experience Galore

His combination of professional training and natural interest in health has made Isaac a virtual encyclopedia of both the micro and macro related to nutrition and alternative medicine. However, when discussing his ability to listen to a customer, understand their ailment and pinpoint the ideal regimen, Isaac points to his experience at the forefront of this field in the Lakewood community.

"Our community's lifestyle is unique and so is, by extension, its nutritional needs," Isaac says.

Kashrus concerns are one obvious area of uniqueness to our community — and Isaac knows all that needs to be known about that — but he expands





upon the various other aspects of community life on which his finger is firmly on the pulse. Our diets, particularly on Shabbosim and Yamim Tovim, are unique, and they can affect our bodies in various ways.

So is our calendar, says Isaac. "Before the Yamim Nora'im, we have *chazzanim* and *baalei tefillah* coming for herbal teas that will keep their voice smooth and steady. Before Yom Kippur, people ask for remedies to help them fast easier. Chanukah brings burns, and Purim brings hangovers, but the time that can be most challenging to our digestive system is Pesach."

Isaac's knowledge and experience enable him to offer the remedies most suitable for the common requests in our community. In addition to help choosing the right product on the shelf, Isaac is a genius when it comes to tweaking and combining various products to suit an individual circumstance, and he can order from a selection of thousands of additional products, from 250 top manufacturers, when necessary.

The Lakewood community's young age and large families, *bli ayin hara*, bring with them many unique needs as well, including those related to stress and anxiety, ADD/ADHD and fertility, and common ailments such as colds, flu and difficulty falling asleep. "I don't recommend that people should not seek the advice of a physician or therapist for these issues, but I see every day how I can help people get significant help from the right supplements, and, oftentimes, diet modifications," says Isaac, who has dealt with every one of these challenges many times over. "This field has advanced tremendously in recent years and there are many natural resources available for real help."

To be sure, Isaac has plenty to say to those of us — children, teenagers and adults alike — who, *baruch Hashem*, suffer from no particular ailment. There is a wealth of natural products that can increase energy, improve focus, prevent illness, and everything in between.

When all is said and done, the man known for his innovative remedies for a spectrum of ailments prefers not to have to use that talent too much. "People should care about their health while they're still young, and not wait until they're older, and then have to fight ailments that could have been avoided," says Isaac. ❏

For more information, please visit Refuah Pharmacy at 911 East County Line Road, or call 732-942-9987.

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