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NISHMA RESEARCH RELEASES BROADEST STUDY DONE ON ORTHODOX JEWS' HEALTH: NUTRITION, DIET, AND WEIGHT ARE THE TOP CONCERN

Nishma Research, in collaboration with JOWMA (The Jewish Orthodox Women's Medical Association), has released "The Orthodox Jewish Community Health Needs Assessment Survey." The full report is available at <https://bit.ly/Nishma-Health-Survey>.

This survey of 1,138 Orthodox Jews (Modern Orthodox and Haredi) examines issues related to personal health, including access to care, impediments to access, types of providers used, knowledge and self-assessed health, and both personal and family-related health concerns.

The study finds that insurance coverage is near universal, but many find cost and availability of providers to be challenging.

The key sections of the report identify the areas of personal health concern, and the top ten areas of concern are:

1. Nutrition, diet and weight (37% list this as a personal concern)
2. Heart and cardiovascular (31%)
3. Mental health (27%)
4. Physical activity (21%)
5. Arthritis, chronic pain (20%)
6. Diabetes (17%)
7. Women's health (17% of women)
8. Gastro-intestinal issues (14%)
9. Dental health (14%)
10. Men's health (14% of men)

For each of these areas, the study details the specific concerns, including many detailed and revealing verbatim responses offered by respondents. For example, they repeatedly lament the emphasis on abundant, heavy food and sweets, especially at Shabbat meals, Kiddushes, and holidays. A few mention simchas. Many see diet as the single greatest health challenge.

Nishma's Mark Trencher, the study director, notes that, "A question we are sometimes asked is, what is done with community research findings? Such research tends to be more descriptive than prescriptive but given the importance of personal health and the fact that individuals can take steps to improve their health, we feel that in this case prescriptive content is important. To that end, this research is offered to the community, and we are delighted to include many detailed and insightful 'Medical Observations & Recommendations' sections prepared by JOWMA, which give practical advice on steps that people can take to improve their health."

A one-question mini-survey being released with the report asks people whether and how they will deal with the dietary challenges around the Pesach holiday. That should be interesting!

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