

FROM THE DOCTORS OF OUR COMMUNITY

Guidelines for Sephardic Community Mikvaot in NY and NJ

Dear Community Members,

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, many questions have risen about the use of the Mikveh during this time. Several community doctors and Rabbis have come up with the following guidelines with the hopes of preserving the holiness of Family Purity, while at the same time protecting the health of our community members and the public.

We would like to preface these guidelines by iterating that the act of immersing in a Mikveh is safe as long as they are properly operated, maintained and disinfected. According to the CDC, *“There is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the use of pools and hot tubs. Proper operation, maintenance, and disinfection (e.g., with chlorine and bromine) of pools and hot tubs should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19.”*

Please note that these guidelines are based on what is currently known. Updates to the guidelines will be communicated as necessary.

Please do NOT attend the Mikveh if you fall into one of the following categories:

- You tested positive for COVID-19
- You were tested for COVID-19 but results are not back yet
- You live with someone who tested positive for COVID-19
- You live with someone who is sick with fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat or body aches but has not been tested for COVID-19
- You have been told by your healthcare provider to quarantine or isolate yourself
- You have been told by your healthcare provider that you are at a higher risk for complications (chronic medical problems, immunosuppressed, chemotherapy, etc.)
- You have any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, or any other signs of a flu-like illness (i.e. runny nose, congestion, body aches, fatigue)

If you cannot attend the Mikveh for any of the above reasons, please contact your local Rabbi for further guidance.

You may return to the Mikveh when all of the following criteria are met: at least 14 days have passed since the onset of symptoms AND all symptoms have resolved AND at least 72 hours without fever (without the use of fever reducing medication). If you have any questions about this, please contact your healthcare provider and local Rabbi prior to attending the Mikveh.

If you do not fall into one of the above categories, you may attend the Mikveh. We ask that you adhere to the following guidelines:

- Please call in advance to make an appointment
- All preparations must be done at home including the final shower
- Please wait in your car until you are told to come in
- Please bring your own towel, robe and slippers
- **All ladies should wear a glove or a bag on their hands when they touch the railings for the staircase.**

Please note that this letter was composed in an expedited fashion as a response to the current quickly changing situation. We apologize in advance for any errors or omissions. We also welcome comments and any other doctors who would like to have their name added to future versions and updates. Please email us at info@scaupdates.org

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Though we will no longer taking temperature as it will bring the attendant too close. Please be prudent and stay home if you have temperature above 100.3.

Anyone with any respiratory symptoms will also be denied entry. Mikveh attendants reserve the right to refuse entry to anyone who is not feeling well, regardless of alleged medical clearance. All cold and flu like illnesses are assumed high risk in these circumstances. **There will be no exceptions.**

Please note that the community Mikvaot will also be taking many extra precautions to ensure proper hygienic standards are met per the CDC and Department of Health.

- Preparation rooms and ALL surfaces including counters, toilets, baths and handrails will be disinfected between uses
- Chlorine, bromine and pH levels will be monitored regularly and will be maintained at the proper levels according to recommendations by the CDC. Ideally pH should be between 7.2-7.8, chlorine levels at least 3 ppm, and bromine levels at least 4 ppm.
- The water will be changed regularly
- Mikveh attendants should wear gloves and a surgical mask
- Mikveh attendants should wash their hands with soap and water before and after contact with another woman
- Mikveh attendants may only perform checks on other women if they are properly equipped with a surgical mask, gloves and disposable gown
- Payment money should preferably be placed in a box or an envelope which will not be handled for 3 days. If credit card is necessary a system should be instituted that will maintain a safe distance between the lady and attendant.

Again, we cannot stress the importance of staying home if you feel ill or fall under any of the categories mentioned earlier. The health of our community is of utmost importance.

We hope that you find the guidance helpful. If you have any questions, please consult your local Rabbi and/or doctor.

Wishing you the best of health,

Your community Doctors,

Robert Husney, MD

Albert Matalon, MD

Robert Matalon, MD

The Mikvaot listed below have agreed to comply with the hygienic standards and guidelines recommended by our community doctors.

Rabbi Ronald Barry

Rabbi Saul J Kassin

Rabbi Moshe Douek

***Rabbi Dr. Henry
Hasson, MD***

Community Mikveh
LTD
583 Kings Highway
718-375-6660

Gladys Kassin Mikveh
Magen David of West Deal
395 Deal Road, Ocean
732-531-3220

Esther Jherin Gorcey
Mikveh
16 Whalepond Rd,
Eatontown
732-222-1278

*Manhattan Beach
Mikveh*
94 Amherst St,
Brooklyn, NY 11235
718-646-0560

If you don't see your mikveh on this list, please encourage them to take every precaution to keep you safe.

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