

Pesach FAQs

The following are answers to questions posed to the cRc by consumers. A more complete list of FAQs can be found on the cRc website at www.crcweb.org.

Food

Brown Sugar

Genuine brown sugar is a precursor to white sugar and does not require special *Pesach* certification. However, nowadays much of the brown sugar sold in the market is actually white sugar which is colored brown with molasses or caramel color, and those two ingredients are potentially not acceptable for *Pesach* (for reasons that are beyond the scope of this document). Additionally, in some brown sugar, the process begins with an enzymatic “inversion” of the sugar. For these reasons, we recommend that consumers only purchase brown sugar that is certified for *Pesach*.

Gluten-Free Foods

People who are celiac or otherwise choose to avoid gluten will not eat items that contain wheat, rye, spelt, and barley, and at first glance it would seem that anything labeled gluten-free is automatically suitable for *Pesach*. The simplest reasons why this is not accurate are that (a) oats can be gluten-free, yet oats mixed with water is *chametz*,

and (b) corn, rice, and beans are all gluten-free but are not eaten by *Ashkenazic* Jews due to the custom of avoiding *kitnios*.

In addition, in order to qualify as gluten-free, the FDA requires that the product be shown to contain less than 20 ppm of gluten. This may be an appropriate standard for people suffering from celiac but such tests will not show whether the product was produced on hot equipment used for *chametz*/gluten (which was not *kashered*) or whether the gluten-free products had incidental contact with gluten-containing grains during transit or processing. Such issues have been observed by *Mashgichim* overseeing *kashrus* for items claiming to be gluten-free.



Gluten free

However, there is a more fundamental reason why gluten-free products are not necessarily acceptable for *Pesach*: the standards for gluten-free and *chametz*-free are not the same! The term “gluten” is used to refer to specific proteins (gliadin, hordein, and secalin) found

in certain grains and any item free of those proteins can be

labeled gluten-free. Of course, these grains also have other components such as starch which may be gluten-free but are most definitely *chametz*. Thus, for example, in some countries wheat starch which is converted into glucose, later becomes alcohol, and finally ferments into vinegar, may be labeled “gluten free” yet the product is clearly not suitable for *Pesach*. A real-life example of this is Benefiber powder which is made of pure wheat dextrin and is *chametz* but since it is free of wheat protein it is labeled as being gluten-free (see <http://bit.ly/1ckR3ng>). Similarly, Scotch whisky is made of malted barley and is surely *chametz*, yet the Scotch Whisky Association proudly reports that it is acceptable for coeliacs (the English spelling of celiac) (see question #90 at <http://bit.ly/HiBrG5>). These examples reflect the fact that the standard for gluten-free is not the same as the halacha’s standard of *chametz*-free.

Accordingly, we recommend that people wishing to purchase food for *Pesach* check that the item is certified as being kosher for *Pesach* and not merely rely on a company’s gluten-free claim.

Medical Chewing a Pill

A person who has difficulty swallowing pills/tablets may

choose to chew it. [Check with your doctor that this is medically advised.]

Coated Pills

Most pills which one swallows are coated with a glaze, wax or shellac which makes the pills easier to swallow, and some of these coatings have some form of simple sugar (e.g. sucrose) mixed in to make it even more pleasant to swallow the pill. None of these ingredients pose a *Pesach* concern. Once in a while a pill is coated with sweeteners which are *Pesach* sensitive (e.g. sorbitol) or which contain a flavor; such items would be listed as one of the inactive ingredients, and we would not recommend those for *Pesach*. [This occurs so infrequently that our general recommendation remains that all pills are permitted.]

An example of this issue is the Advil brand family of tablets. The (inactive) ingredient panel of the standard Advil tablets shows that they contain pharmaceutical glaze (i.e. shellac) and sucralose, and one who swallows an Advil pill notices that they have a more pleasant/sweet taste than pills coated with a non-sweetened coating. These do not pose a Passover concern. However, the ingredient panel on the “Film-Coated” Advil tablets indicates that its coating contains a flavor, and that variety is therefore not recommended.

Colonoscopy

The primary solutions used to flush the patient’s colon in preparation for a colonoscopy are polyethylene glycol based

(e.g. GoLYTELY, NuLYTELY, MiraLAX). The ingredients used in the unflavored versions of both of these solutions do not pose any *Pesach* concern and may be consumed on *Pesach*. These solutions are also available pre-flavored or with a “flavor pack” that one adds to the solution, and these are not recommended for *Pesach*.

In recent years, another option has become available – sodium phosphate tablets (e.g. Osmo-Prep, Visicol). As with all other inedible tablets which are swallowed (as opposed to chewed), these tablets may be used on *Pesach* regardless of which ingredients they contain.

If someone is unable to drink the unflavored solution, and their doctor recommends that they not use the tablets, they should consult their Rabbi and doctor as to whether they may take the flavored solution and/or reschedule the procedure for before or after *Pesach*.

Diabetes

At the *Seder* one is required to consume large quantities of carbs, such as wine and *matzah*, which poses a unique challenge for diabetics. An excellent and thorough guide for this has been written by Rabbi Hirsch Meisels of the “Friends with Diabetes” website. The English version of the guide is available at <http://friendswithdiabetes.org/files/pdf/Pesachenglish.pdf>, and that website also has other resources for Jewish diabetics. We have not reviewed the medical and *halachic* advice provided by those guides

and recommend you discuss the details with your doctor and Rabbi.

Intravenous

Someone who must be hospitalized on *Pesach* may allow him or herself to be given any intravenous fluid because (a) it is unlikely that they contain *chametz* and (b) even if it did, there is *halachic* rationale to permit any incapacitated person (even without a condition as serious as yours) to use it.

Kashering Barbeque Grill

The grates of a barbeque grill must be *kashered* with *libun gamur*, which is not recommended for the average consumer. If a person purchases separate grates for *Pesach*, the rest of the grill can be *kashered* with *libun kal*, which can be accomplished relatively easily, as follows:

If the grill comes with a cover, light the grill with coals or gas, close the cover, and allow it to burn on its highest setting (or filled with a considerable amount of coal) for an hour. If the grill does not have a cover, follow the same procedure, but make sure that all surfaces of the grill are covered with coals. As with all items being *kashered*, it is crucial that the grill be cleaned thoroughly of all food residue, which is often a particular difficulty in a barbeque grill. In fact, if the grill has too many holes, cracks, and crevices where food may get trapped, one should refrain from *kashering* the grill at all.



Proxa
Brush

Braces

We have been told by orthodontists that [for those people who do not have a water-flosser (e.g. Waterpik)] the best way to clean braces is to use a “proxal brush” which has a narrow bristled end that fits between the different wires and brackets. It is an inexpensive and effective tool for removing all residue from braces and other dental appliances.

Counter

Shulchan Aruch 451:20 says that tables should be *kashered* via *irui kli rishon*. However, *Mishnah Berurah* 451:114 questions this ruling because occasionally a hot *davar gush* (solid food) of *chametz* might be placed onto the table, and we are *machmir* for those opinions that *davar gush* has the status of a *kli rishon* such that *irui kli rishon* would not be a sufficient *kashering*. Based on this question, *Mishnah Berurah* recommends that tables be *kashered* via *irui kli rishon* using an *even m'lubenes* so as to bring the level of *kashering* closer to that of a true *kli rishon*. Based on this, you may wonder why our *kashering* guide says that a table can be *kashered* via a mere *irui kli rishon* and makes no note of an *even m'lubenes*. The answer requires a deeper understanding of the *halacha* of “*rov tashmisho*”, as follows:

Shulchan Aruch 451:6 rules that – if a utensil is *aino ben yomo* – the method of *kashering* is determined by looking at the primary way the utensil is used (*rov tashmisho*) such that a table can be *kashered* via *irui kli rishon* because the primary use of the table is not for

a hot *davar gush*. *Rema* agrees that the letter of the law follows *Shulchan Aruch's* ruling, but says that the *Ashkenazic* custom is to be *machmir* and choose a method of *kashering* that even suffices for the secondary uses (*miut tashmisho*) of the utensil. Accordingly, in the case of a table *irui kli rishon* is not sufficient, and that is the basis for *Mishnah Berurah's* question. Since it is merely a *chumrah* to be concerned with *miut tashmisho*, one is not required to follow that *chumrah* in cases of *b'dieved* (as noted in the aforementioned *Mishnah Berurah* and in *Rema* 451:6) or in cases where that will mean it is impossible to *kasher* the utensil (see *Sha'ar HaTziun* 451:51, based in essence on the ruling of *Rema* YD 121:5).

Accordingly, if one were able to *kasher* their table or counter via *irui kli rishon* with an *even m'lubenes* that would be the best way to *kasher* it, and in fact there are some people who do this. However, for most of the public this suggestion is impractical due to the (a) inability of many surfaces to withstand such heat and (b) the difficulty in properly using an *even m'lubenes* over a large surface. Therefore, we treat this situation as one where *kashering* based on *miut tashmisho* will mean that it is impossible to *kasher* the utensil, and rely on the letter of the law that one may *kasher* based on *rov tashmisho* (i.e. *irui kli rishon* without an *even m'lubenes*).

Counter Covers

Some people have Formica-type covers professionally made to

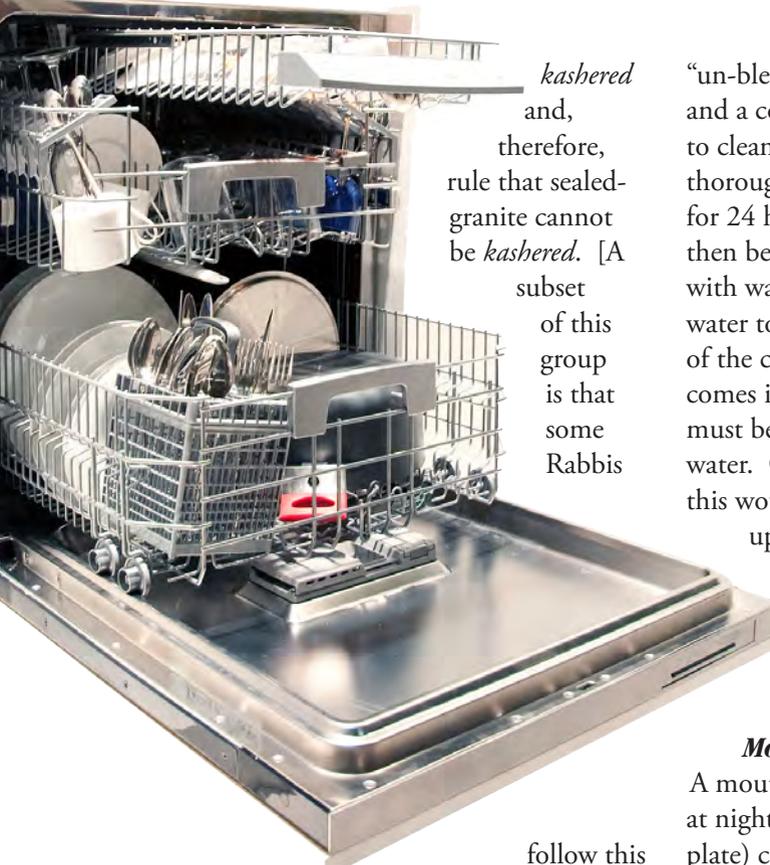
cover their counters for *Pesach*. Standard Formica is made of a very thin layer of laminate/plastic glued to a thick piece of wood, and the special *Pesach* covers are made from the same laminate glued to a thin piece of wood (to make it easier to maneuver and save from year to year).

Dishwasher

The first step in *kashering* any item is to remove all residual *chametz*. With this in mind, *Rema* 451:18 rules that any utensil which has small cracks and crevices where food might get trapped should not be *kashered* for *Pesach* because of the difficulty in getting the utensil perfectly clean. Our guide presents the position of our Posek, Rav Schwartz, who holds that the racks, silverware holder, and drain/filter areas of a dishwasher are classic examples of *Rema's* ruling; since there is a concern that food might be left in these areas, a dishwasher cannot be *kashered* for *Pesach*. Others hold that *Rema's* ruling is limited to strainers and other items that (a) have smaller and many more holes and (b) come in direct contact with *Pesach* food.

Granite

It is well established that stone can be *kashered* (see *Shulchan Aruch* 451:8), and one would therefore imagine that all Rabbis would agree that granite can be *kashered*. However, granite is commonly sealed with a synthetic coating so as to prevent staining, and there is a difference of opinion as to whether that coating can be *kashered*. Some Rabbis follow the opinion that synthetic materials cannot be



*kasher*ed and, therefore, rule that sealed-granite cannot be *kasher*ed. [A subset of this group is that some Rabbis

follow this strict opinion for *Pesach* but not when *kasher*ing from non-kosher to kosher.] The cRc and most other *hashgochos* accept the lenient opinion that synthetics may be *kasher*ed and therefore our *Pesach* Guide provides directions for how granite and other sealed stone surfaces can be *kasher*ed.

For more on the question of whether synthetics can be *kasher*ed, you may want to see *Iggeros Moshe* OC 2:92 & 3:58, *Tzitz Eliezer* 4:6:c and *Minchas Yitzchok* 3:67.

Kedairah Blech

A kedairah blech can be *kasher*ed with *hag'alab*. [Although people may put dry *chametz* foods (e.g. challah) directly onto the kedairah blech, the blech's pan is filled with water and therefore *libun gamur* is not required.] The kedairah blech, a.k.a. the

"un-blech", has two parts, a pan and a cover. The first step is to clean the pan and the cover thoroughly, and not use them for 24 hours. The pan should then be *kasher*ed by filling it with water and bringing that water to a rolling boil. The top of the cover (i.e. the side which comes in contact with the pots) must be submerged into boiling water. One possible way to do this would be by placing the cover upside down in the pan as it is filled with water, which is brought to a rolling boil (as described above).

Mouth Guard

A mouth guard used year-round at night (i.e., a nocturnal bite plate) can be used for *Pesach* after it is thoroughly cleaned with a brush and soap.

Rotisserie

Although the spits, poles, and skewers in a rotisserie oven can be *kasher*ed with *libun kal* from kosher meat to pareve, the same procedure cannot be used when *kasher*ing from *chametz* to *Pesach*.

In this regard, the *kasher*ing requirement after *chametz* is stricter than after kosher meat, because *chametz* is a forbidden item (*isurah*), (albeit only for 8 days a year), while kosher meat is inherently kosher/permitted (*betairah*). Accordingly, although *libun kal* suffices when *kasher*ing between kosher meat and pareve, a more intensive *libun gamur* is required to *kasher* the skewers from *chametz* use for *Pesach*. [The rest of the rotisserie chamber, can be *kasher*ed with *libun kal*

regardless of whether it was used for kosher, non-kosher, *chametz* or anything else].

Sink Insert

Porcelain sinks cannot be *kasher*ed, and therefore they can only be used on *Pesach* with a bowl-like "insert" put into the sink. The insert does not have to cover all interior surfaces of the sink but you should be careful to never put *Pesach* food, *Pesach* dishes, or any hot liquids into the space between the insert and the sink.

Urn

Rav Schwartz ruled that an electric urn which is not brought to the table during the year, is never used for anything but heating hot water, and is not washed with *chametz* items, may be used for *Pesach* without *kasher*ing. If it is small enough to be brought to the table, is used to heat other beverages, it is ever used to warm challah or other food on top of it for Shabbos, or it is cleaned with vinegar (to remove calcium buildup) or with the *chametz* dishes, then it should not be used for *Pesach* without *kasher*ing.

Water Filter

A Brita pitcher used year-round should be cleaned well on the inside and outside because it is used at meals where *chametz* is served. It would also be commendable to use a new filter cartridge for *Pesach*. [Placing your "chametz" cartridge in water for *Pesach* will allow you to reuse it after *Pesach*.] There is no need for a hot *kasher*ing of the pitcher.