



PESACH FAQs

MEDICINE & COSMETICS

Alcohol

Q I know that alcohol can be made from wheat. What about things like isopropyl alcohol?

A Benzyl alcohol, methyl alcohol (a.k.a., methanol), isopropyl alcohol and stearyl alcohol are not made from *chametz*. Ethyl alcohol, a.k.a. ethanol, can be made from *chametz*, and isoamyl alcohol is often a byproduct of whiskey. [These might be listed as part of a compound, like ethyl acetate or isoamyl butyrate.] So, they're not recommended unless they are known to be *chametz*-free.

There are different opinions about whether denatured alcohol (SD alcohol) is forbidden on Pesach. The cRc position is that it's permitted in a product manufactured in the United States.

Toothpaste

Q Is it okay to use my regular toothpaste on Pesach?

A Some *poskim* hold that toothpaste is considered inedible, since any food that tastes like toothpaste would never be served as a meal item. This is the justification for why many rabbis allow the use of any toothpaste (year-round) despite the possibility that the glycerin contained in the toothpaste is made from non-kosher animal fat. Others argue that toothpaste is halachically considered edible, since we put toothpaste into our mouths every day (and young children like to eat it). Some follow that position all year round and will only use a toothpaste that is certified as kosher (or free of glycerin).

The cRc accepts the lenient approach as relates to year-round use but recommends that one be *machmir* for Pesach – that you should only use a toothpaste that's known to be *chametz*-free.

What ingredients in toothpaste might be *chametz*? Just about every variety of toothpaste has sorbitol, which is created by "hydrogenating" glucose, which can be derived from *chametz*, *kitniyos*, or completely innocuous ingredients, and though most glucose and sorbitol in the U.S. is not made from *chametz*, we can't recommend toothpaste unless we know what the glucose is made from. Toothpastes also commonly contain other minor ingredients which raise *chametz* concerns.

Contact Lens Solution

Q Do I need special contact lens solution for Pesach?

A We reviewed the ingredients used in several popular brands of contact lens solution and didn't see anything which was sensitive for Pesach. Some brands are listed in the Medicine Guide and others can be found in the eye product checker on our website. But since we haven't checked every brand, you're welcome to send a picture of the ingredient panel to info@crckosher.org, and one of our rabbis will check on it for you.

Hand Sanitizer

Q Do alcohol-based sanitizers require Pesach certification?

A Alcohol-based hand sanitizers, like Purell, usually have at least 62% ethyl alcohol, which may possibly be *chametz*. However, Rav Gedalia Dov Schwartz *zt"l* checked a sample of hand sanitizers and said that it's as inedible as other liquid soaps and may, therefore, be used on Pesach, regardless of the source of alcohol. [An additional factor to consider is that the alcohol used in the hand sanitizers is denatured.]

Steamers

Q Can I kasher my countertops with a steamer?

A The general rule (as per *Iggeros Moshe YD 1:60*) is that *kashering* must be done with water in liquid form, and can't be done with steam. So, a steamer can only be used for *kashering* if two conditions are met. First, the steam must condense to the point that the whole area being *kashered* is covered with water, and second, that water must be at approximately the boiling point (212°F). Most steamers sold for cleaning purposes do not meet these criteria and can't be used for *kashering*, but the Wagner Power Steamer 715 can be used, if one is diligent to use it slowly and with patience.

Consumers who hire outside companies to kasher should verify the qualification of both the service providers and the equipment.

SHOPPING GUIDE

Bottled Water

Q Is bottled water acceptable for Pesach without special certification?

A Yes, and this is true even if the water also has these minerals: calcium chloride, magnesium chloride, magnesium oxide, magnesium sulfate, potassium bicarbonate, potassium chloride, sodium bicarbonate, or sodium chloride. But if it has any vitamins and/or citrates (e.g., calcium citrate), then it should only be used with kosher for Pesach certification.

Buy Before Pesach

Q I see that you recommend certain items for Pesach but say they should be bought before Yom Tov. If they do not contain any *chametz*, why can't I also buy them on Chol HaMoed?

A There are a handful of items – milk, eggs (in the shell), bagged salads, baby carrots – where (a) additives are used which might be *chametz* (although they probably aren't), (b) the additives are *batel b'shishim*, but (c) they're in stores very soon after they're processed. So, the milk, eggs, etc., which you buy on Chol HaMoed might have been produced on Pesach with a *chametz* additive which can't be *batel* (since it was added on Pesach). This is why we recommend that if these items aren't available with Pesach certification, you should buy them before Yom Tov.

Contradictory Certifications

Q I saw a package that had two kosher certifications on it. Next to one it said, "Kosher for Passover," and near the other one it said, "Kosher for Year-round Use and Not for Passover." Which one is it?

A Most of the time, this is because the two *hashgachos* disagree about a point of halachah or policy. For example, some rabbis allow the use of quinoa on Pesach, while others consider it *kitniyos*. The agency which marks the product as "Kosher for Passover" took the lenient position, and the other agency disagreed and took the stricter decision. Your rabbi should be able to figure out what the point of difference is and then direct you as to which of these opinions you should follow.

Seltzer

Q Why does the cRc require a Pesach *hechsher* on unflavored seltzer?

A There are several ways to collect the carbon dioxide used to make seltzer. One source is a byproduct of beer or whiskey production. And of course, beer and (just about all) whiskey are *chametz*. There's a difference of rabbinic opinion about whether the *chametz* status transfers to the carbon dioxide gas. Some say that since carbon dioxide is a gas, and it is "scrubbed" of all *chametz* taste, it's permitted on Pesach, despite the *chametz* source. The cRc follows the stricter opinion that treats the gas as *chametz*, since it's a direct result of the beer or whiskey production.

KASHERING

Induction Cooktop

Q How can I *kasher* my induction cooktop for Pesach?

A Induction cooktops don't have a heating coil or other heat source, so there's no realistic way to *kasher* them. The only way to use the induction cooktop on Pesach is to put a physical barrier between the cooking surface and the pots. This can be done either with "induction discs" (widely available to help people cook on an induction surface with pots that are not ferromagnetic) or a "mat" that's designed for an induction cooktop. Although the cooktop won't have been *kashered*, the barrier prevents any absorbed *chametz* from spreading to the pots and food.

On a related note, using an induction cooktop raises significant *halachic* issues on Shabbos and Yom Tov

[some of which might be eliminated by the use of the induction discs noted above], and consumers should consult with their rabbi for guidance.

Iron for Kashering

Q My son suggested we *kasher* our countertops by running a hot iron over them. Would this work?

A A counter can't be *kashered* with a clothing iron without any water present. Theoretically, hot water could be poured on the counter, and then the iron could be used to bring that water to a boil, but because it would be too difficult to know whether every single part of the countertop came into contact with boiling water, we wouldn't recommend it.