

Hilchos Niddah

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Staining

Hargasha (feeling)

- If there's a hargasha, any amount of blood, even the tiniest drop, will make nidda. There's no difference if it's found on white or on color.

- Nowadays, the only hargasha that matters is if there's a feeling of something (usually fluid) actually leaving the body

- Just feeling wetness on the underwear is NOT a hargasha

- If you think you have had a hargasha then ask a Rov how to proceed

- Any uterine bleeding that's not from a cut is nidda blood. Even if it's during pregnancy or from birth control

The following halachos apply if there was NO hargasha:

Stains found on any form of clothing:

If the clothing is any type of white:

- Up until the size of a penny is fine
- The total area of the stain has to be less than a penny

- Each stain that's found on garments gets its own penny and the stains don't combine as long as they're not connected

- Multiple stains found on the body combine to the measurement of a penny. On the hand they don't combine

- It's fine even during the seven clean days

- If the stain is bigger than a penny but the blood component is less than a penny, it's also fine

- Stains found on a combination of color and white are complicated and a Sheila needs to be asked

If the clothing is any type of color:

- Any staining, even if it's considerably large, is fine

- If the staining gets to be near the amount of a period (approximately four quarters worth), a Sheila should be asked

- Any colored clothing is considered colored even if it's light (ex. Pastels, creams etc.)

- It's recommended to always use colored underwear (except for during the 7 clean days), sheets and towels

- It's fine even if it's at the time of an expected period

- If the stain goes through color onto white then it's considered like it fell on white (ex. A stain that goes through underwear onto the white of tights or stockings) A shaila should be asked because there are many variables

If it's found on something that can't become tameh:

- Same Halacha as colored clothing
- Common examples: sanitary napkins and liners, toilet seat, floor, tissues

Stains found on anything inserted vaginally:

- If it's red, it's nidda no matter the size of the stain

- Even if it's not at the time of an expected period it's still nidda

- Many times there can be blood found on a Dr's glove or instruments.

Therefore it's better not to look. Many times it can be from irritation

- Many times there can be an irritation and therefore it wouldn't make nidda. A Sheila should be asked

- Tissues after urinating: it's very unclear if wiping is considered an insertion. Many are strict, many are lenient. Therefore tissues should never be looked at. If there's blood on the tissue then a Sheila needs to be asked

- Blood found in the urine or within a short time after using the bathroom has the same status as the above and a Sheila needs to be asked

Even if all of the above leniencies fail and it seems like we'd have to be strict and consider it nidda, if we can say, with even reasonable doubt, that the stain came from someplace else then we would be lenient. A Sheila should be asked

Examples:

- Vaginal irritations
- Hemorrhoids
- Red string in the bedika cloth
- Makeup
- Food on the hands

Five days

- Whenever the period starts, a minimum of five days must pass before the hefsek tahara process can be attempted

- No matter what time of the day the period started, the first day is over at shkiah. Even if the period started a minute before shkiah the first day is still over at shkiah

- Even if the period started within a half hour after shkiah, it can still be counted as the first day

- Under extenuating circumstances a hefsek tahara can be attempted after four days instead of five days. Reasons can include: ovulating before mikva, travel, two

day Yom tov, just becoming religious. A Sheila should be asked

- If a woman stained but not enough to make nidda but they abstained as a precaution and then she got her period, a Sheila should be asked as to when she can start the five days

- If a period was preceded by vestos or any day that intimacy wasn't allowed, a Sheila should be asked when to start the five days

- If for some reason the seven clean days has to be started over, a new five day wait is not necessary and the new hefsek tahara can be done immediately

Hefsek Tahara/Moch Dachuk

-A hefsek tahara is required in order to start the seven clean days

Time

- Best time is as close to shkiah as possible

- From mincha ketana (approximately 2 and a half hours before shkiah) is acceptable

- Bidieved, any time during the day is good and even from the night before is acceptable

- If the period is over earlier in the day, do the hefsek earlier just in case you forget to repeat it later

- The latest time to attempt it is shkiah

- Some would, bidieved, allow the hefsek until a few minutes after shkiah but a Sheila needs to be asked

- Suggested time is half an hour before shkiah, in order to give enough time to repeat the hefsek if the first ones are not good

Preparation

- Best is to shower and clean all areas that might have residue from the period

before attempting the hefsek. A shower after the period was mostly over is sufficient

- If not, wash any areas that might have stains
- If there was no washing it's fine
- Some say to wait 15 minutes in between washing and the hefsek. Many disagree
- This stringency only applies if a) there was a preparatory bath and not a shower b) there's no moch dachuk going to be done
- If shkiah is going to pass, no waiting is necessary
- If there was no wait then it's definitely good

Procedure

- A white cotton soft cloth is preferred
- Should be inserted as far as possible and rotated to touch all the corners
- If there's pain then a Sheila should be asked how to proceed
- A tampon is not good because it doesn't touch the corners
- The finger by itself is not good
- Bidieved, a tissue is good if it has no creams on it and if it comes out without any rips or tears
- If necessary, the cloth can be wet and squeezed out very well before using
- If necessary, lubricant can be put inside the body two hours or so before the hefsek. A Sheila should be asked

Moch Dachuk

- Should be put inside at shkiah and not before (even if there was a clean hefsek well before shkiah)
- Preferably should be kept in for 42 minutes
- No reason to move it around inside the body unless you want it to be used as a backup Hefsek Taharah

- A tampon can be used for this
 - We're very lenient with the moch dachuk. A Sheila should be asked.
- Examples: irritation, newlywed, after childbirth or miscarriage, certain birth controls, staining, infertility, etc.

Special occasions

- On Friday the hefsek should preferably be done before candlelighting and the moch put in at shkiah
- On Shabbos, no washing before the hefsek with cloths. Just with water
- On Tisha Bav and Yom Kippur hot water from an urn can be used to wash up before the hefsek
- Hot water from an urn can be mixed with cold water

Seven clean days

Underwear

- White underwear should be worn starting at shkiah
- It's preferable to be white on both sides not just the inside
- Minhag is to use white sheets on the bed but it's not required
- Pads/liners should lechatchila not be used. If necessary ask a Shaila
- Under certain circumstances colored underwear and/or pads can/should be worn. Ask a Shaila
- If mikva is being pushed off and won't be on the night after the seventh day, white underwear no longer should be worn
- As long as the stains on the underwear are smaller than a penny they're fine even if it's definitely blood
- On underwear, each stain gets its own penny

Bedikos

- Lechatchila, two bedikos a day. One in the morning and one in the evening before sunset
- Bidieved, one bedika on the first day and one bedika on the seventh day
- Even if there is a heter to do a bedika on day one and day seven, there are many advantages to doing a bedika on day four or five
- If only one bedika was done during the seven clean days, a shaila should be asked
- Bedikos are only done during the day and not at night
- Day starts at sunrise and ends at sunset
- The hefsek tahara is not one of the bedikos of the seven days. It's the afternoon before the 7 clean days
- Many times we are lenient to do less bedikos (irritation, staining etc.)
- Bedikos should be inserted as far as possible and rotated to touch all the corners
- If it's not possible, a Sheila should be asked
- Washing and/or cleaning oneself is not allowed before the bedikos
- If there's a question on a bedika or stain, don't decide that it's not good until you ask a shaila
- If you can't get to a Rov, continue doing bedikos and everything will get recalculated based on the psak from the Rov

Mikva Preparation (chafifah)

Timing

- Preferred is to prepare partially during the day and partially at night
- Preparation as close to mikva time as possible is best

- Anytime during the day is allowed as long as a shower is taken in the mikva and the body is rechecked
- If preparation is going to be done completely at night then it requires an hour of preparation

Preparation

- Remove all jewelry, makeup, contact lenses etc.
- Cut nails preferably as close to where it meets the skin as possible and remove any hanging skin
- Wash and check entire body with hot water and soap
- Wash and brush hair when wet
- Wash with hot water and check all hidden parts of the body like ears, nose, between the toes etc.
- Brush teeth and use floss if necessary
- Use the bathroom if necessary
- The minhag is to take a bath for half an hour
- All the above preparations can be done while in the bath
- Therefore the entire preparation shouldn't be more than a half hour unless there's a specific issue
- If necessary, a long shower is allowed (ex. No access to a bath, embarrassment, pregnancy, risk of infection etc.)

Post preparation

- No food should be eaten
- Drinks are allowed (water is preferred)
- No food preparation
- If food preparation is necessary, use gloves and then wash hands
- If preparation is done at home, a shower should be taken at the mikva and the body and hair should be rechecked right before going to mikva

Miscellaneous

- No meat, chicken or anything that gets stuck in the teeth should be eaten the day of mikva
- No working with wax, glue, dough etc.
- It's better to shave/wax the day before the Mikva. If not, it can be done the day of the Mikva but make sure to clean very well

Mikva

- Many have the minhag for the mikva lady to recheck the woman. This is a minhag and if it makes you uncomfortable then don't do it
 - Someone has to see the actual tevila
 - Lechatchila, 42 minutes after shkiah is the earliest time for tevila
 - If necessary, tevila can be approximately 20 minutes after shkiah. Ask a Shaila
 - In very extenuating circumstances tevila during the day might be allowed. Ask a Shaila
 - Minhag is to dip three times
 - If necessary, once is enough. Ask a Shaila
 - If you're nervous about the teeth after mikva without a specific reason, eat something immediately after leaving the mikva
 - Nowadays, that couples are usually in touch with each other, you don't have to verbalize that you went to mikva. If your husband is aware that you're going is enough. If when you come home you show your husband that you dove then that's also enough
 - After Mikva, there's no rethinking about whether there was anything foreign on the body

Friday night mikva

- All preparation should be done before candlelighting
- Mikva should be before eating the meal. If there will be embarrassment then after the meal is allowed but the teeth and hands have to be redone. No chicken or meat can be eaten

Motzai shabbos and motzai Yom tov mikva

- A full preparation should preferably be done anytime on Friday.
- After shabbos: shower, comb hair, clean teeth and check the body
- Meat and chicken can be eaten on Shabbos
- If there's no time to do the preparation on Friday, if it's inconvenient, or stressful then all the preparation can be done Motzai Shabbos but then the entire preparation must take a minimum of an hour
- Sfarim do all the preparation after shabbos

Mikva on second or third night yom tov/shabbos.

- a full preparation should be done on Erev shabbos/Yom tov as close to shabbos/Yom tov as possible
- If it's not possible, do the preparations earlier but preferably after all the cooking is done
- If cooking has to be done after the preparation, use gloves
- Hair should be tied up etc. so that it doesn't become tangled
- If necessary (e.g. Embarrassment) one might be able to go to the Mikva earlier than nightfall
- Meat and chicken can be eaten on Shabbos/Yom tov
- Makeup that can easily be removed is allowed to be worn before Shabbos/Yom tov

- Makeup can be removed by putting makeup remover on the hand. Tissues, cotton etc. can't be used
- When touching actual food, gloves should be worn. If not possible, make sure to wash hands very well after touching food
- Before Mikva, use pre-cut floss and/or a dry toothbrush to check the teeth. If they'll bleed then just carefully use a toothpick to check the teeth
- Before Mikva, wash as much of the body as possible with warm water (on shabbos, mix hot water from an urn with cold water. On Yom tov, from the faucet is fine) and check the entire body
- Before Mikva, run the fingers through all hair. If there's a knot in the hair, ask a goy to take it out or to comb the hair
- Tevila should be before the night meal. In case of embarrassment after the meal is allowed

Vestos

- All the calculations are from the first day of the previous period
- If the last period started during the day then all the separations will be during the day. If the last period started at night then all the separations will be during the night
- Day is from netz (sunrise) until shkiah (sunset). Night is from shkiah until netz
- The separation is from relations only. Intimate touching and sleeping in the same bed is allowed (be careful about zera levatala) However, there is Bracha if there's no touching and/or no sleeping in the same bed
- Harchakos don't have to be kept
- A bedika should be done at the beginning and end of each separation day/night. Ask a shaila when to do the second bedika of the night

- If the bedikos were forgotten: if it's a non kavua day (probable) it's fine. If it's a kavua day (not probable) then touching won't be allowed until a bedika is done. The thirtieth day has the status of a vest kavua and a bedika has to be done before resuming touching
- After the vest day passes, underwear should be checked before intimacy to see if there's staining

There are three basic days that have to be kept:

- Hebrew day of the month (ex. If the last period started on the fifth day of Nissan then the separation will be on the fifth day of Iyar)
- Amount of days between the last two periods (ex. Count from day one of last month's period and end the cycle with the first day of the next period. Then count that amount of days from the first day of the current period)
- The thirtieth day from the first day of the period
- If there's any sign of consistency to the periods then a Sheila should be asked
- Taking birth control could change the halachos because many times it controls the periods. A Sheila should be asked

Chumros

- The ohr zarua: on each separation day, we add on the day or night before so that all together it ends up being a full day and night of separation
- Kreisi Upleisi: the thirtieth day is always a full Jewish calendar day which is from shkiah until shkiah regardless of whether the period started during the day or during the night
- Some say that the thirtieth day is really the thirty first day (R' Moshe Feinstein)

Harchakos

- No touching even through clothing
- No handing even if it's very long
- No throwing
- Dropping something into a bag that's being held is allowed
- No handing babies until they're of the age that they can move towards the other spouse
- If necessary a baby can be placed or taken from the lap of the other if the other is not holding on
- Unless necessary, no carrying or pushing object together
- No pushing in a wheelchair unless necessary
- Husband can't see any normally covered parts of the wife
- The wife can't sing for or with the husband but if she's singing for herself it's allowed
- No smelling her perfume when it's on her
- No flirting
- Serving both food and drink to each other should be done differently than normal (placing it a little distance away or using the opposite hand than normal)
- A serving plate can be served without a shinui
- The husband can't serve wine to the wife even with a shinui and even through a third party
- Making the beds in the morning is allowed but not before going to sleep
- No preparing bathing water in front of each other
- When eating together without others at the same table, a "heker" is necessary (something that's not being used during that meal)
- No sharing from the same plate. One has to put it down on the table first

- The wife can eat the husbands leftovers
- The husband can't eat the wife's leftovers unless she leaves the room or if it's put onto another plate or if someone else eats from her plate first
- No sleeping in the same bed even with individual blankets and even if there's a barrier in between
- Beds that are touching are considered the same bed
- According to the basic Halacha, it's enough to have a fraction of an inch in between the beds but the minhag is to have more than that
- The wife can't lay on the husbands bed when the husband is home. However she can sit on his bed even in front of him
- The husband can't lay or sit on the wife's bed even when she's not home
- No sitting together on a bench that moves unless someone sits in between. A large object in between is also allowed
- Sitting on a couch that has separate cushions or that you can't feel each other's movements is allowed
- No rowboats or motorboats unless there is someone else on them too
- All Harchakos have to be kept even if it will be embarrassing. It's a kiddush Hashem