

בית הוראה דיעטראיט
BAIS HORA AH OF DETROIT
HALACHA HOTLINE

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF **HaRav Shmuel Irons** שליט"א VAAD HALACHA **Rav Aharon Yoel Sorscher** • **Rav Yissachar Wolf** • **Rav Boruch Miller**

KITCHEN * SHABBOS * YOM TOV * BRACHOS * AVEILUS * TAHARAS HAMISHPACHA * EVERYDAY SHAILOS

ISSUE # 17 – Children FAQs

Commonly Received Questions and their Answers

Below are some common questions and answers based on psakim from the rabbonim of the Bais Horaah. Please note: in the event one believes they have heard a different opinion in the past, one's family posek should always be consulted. Mareh mekomos for any specific answers below are available by email request to ask@bhdetroit.org.

- **Is it permitted to use baby wipes on Shabbos and Yom Tov?**
 - According to most halachic authorities, the use of baby wipes on Shabbos or Yom Tov is prohibited due to the prohibition of squeezing out liquid. The best option is to use a spray along with a dry wipe or tissue. If this is too difficult, there is room to be lenient and use a wet wipe once the baby has been sprayed well.
- **Is it permitted to put diaper cream on a baby on Shabbos or Yom Tov?**
 - Application of medicinal cream on Shabbos and Yom Tov can be a violation of refuah (healing) as well as mimareiach (smoothing). Generally, this level of discomfort would not allow for the use of medicinal treatment in adults, however, it is permitted for a baby. The best option to avoid the concern of mimareiach is to use a liquid diaper rash spray. If that is not an option, the cream may be applied in an irregular fashion, and without smearing. An example would be squeezing the tube onto the diaper and allowing the baby's natural movements to spread the cream. If the cream is in a non-squeezable container, it should be applied with the back of a spoon onto the diaper in the same manner as above.
- **Is it permitted to give a child Tylenol or similar medications on Shabbos or Yom Tov?**
 - For young children, it is permitted to give medicine even in a case of minor discomfort. Because proper dosage is important for the safety and effectiveness of the medicine, it is permitted to use a measuring spoon or syringe.
- **Is it permitted for children to take vitamins on Shabbos or Yom Tov?**
 - Yes, it is permitted. Note: Chewable vitamins must have a reliable hashgacha. Additionally, if chewable vitamins have a good taste, a bracha of shehakol should be made prior.
- **Is it permitted to tie a bag which contains a dirty diaper?**
 - A soiled diaper is muktza. However, if it is bothersome in its current location, it may be moved. If the diaper is placed in a bag, care must be taken not to tie the bag in such a way that the knot will last indefinitely. This applies even to a tight single knot. Instead, the top of the bag may be twisted in such a way that odor is trapped.
- **Can hot water be mixed with powdered formula?**
 - Since the formula is cooked as part of its manufacturing, mixing it with hot water is permitted on Shabbos. To satisfy most halachic opinions, the water should first be poured into another cup before it is poured into the bottle. Additionally, because a kli sheini was used, cold water may be added to cool the bottle.
 - Please note: This only applies to baby formula which is known to be pre-cooked. Other powdered products, such as hot cocoa mix, are not permitted unless determined to be pre-cooked. As per the Star-K, Ko-Sure brand hot cocoa is not pre-cooked.
- **Is it permitted to use the formula measuring scoop and water level measurements on a bottle?**
 - They may be used in an approximate manner. If a baby requires precisely measured portions, that is also permitted.
- **Can one prepare instant baby cereal on Shabbos?**
 - In order to avoid violating bishul (cooking) and losh (kneading), the following steps must be followed:
 1. The baby cereal must be fully cooked, or the water that is used must not be yad soledes (less than 110 fahrenheit).
 2. The typical order of weekday preparation steps must be reversed, e.g. adding the liquid before the cereal.
 3. Ideally, to avoid most shailos, the cereal should be made as liquidy as the child can tolerate.
 4. The mixing pattern must be abnormal, e.g. using criss-cross strokes instead of circular, and it is preferable that the utensil be taken out after each stroke.
 5. It should preferably be prepared only for immediate use
- **Is it permitted to mash a banana for a child on Shabbos?**
 - In order to avoid the prohibition of tochain (grinding food into small pieces), it should be done only for immediate use, and while using the utensil in an abnormal way, e.g. using the handle of the fork instead of the tines.
- **Are riding toys, scooters or ballplaying permitted on Shabbos and Yom Tov?**
 - These questions were covered in "Issue #6 - Summer FAQs." For a copy of that issue – as well as other past and/or future issues - send an email to subscribe@bhdetroit.org.

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- **Are there halachic concerns involved with children playing games on Shabbos?**
 - Many popular games are permitted, examples include Candy Land, Snakes & Ladders, Battleship, Othello, chess and checkers. However, there are games which are forbidden on Shabbos due to various melachos, and as such it is important to check with a Halachic authority with regard to specific games. **Whether or not a child should be stopped from playing with particular toys or games on Shabbos depends on the age and maturity level of the child, the specific toy involved, and other chinuch factors.** These are individualized considerations that should be discussed with one's personal Rov.
- **Is it permitted for children to play with Lego or Clics?**
 - The general rule with these toys is as follows: anything which attaches well and will stay in place for a long period of time should not be played with on Shabbos. However, temporary play is permitted for children.
- **May children create tents with blankets, or structures with The Nugget?**
 - The prohibition of ohel (roofing) applies even to small, temporary structures that have any manner of roof. It is therefore not permitted to create even a temporary, roofed structure out of pillows, blankets or a buildable play couch (e.g. The Nugget).
- **Is it permitted to play with Magna-Tiles?**
 - Creating structures with any type of roof from Magna-Tiles will likely come to a violation of ohel. Therefore, it is best for children to avoid using them.
- **Is it permitted to do puzzles on Shabbos or Yom Tov?**
 - Only very loose-fitting puzzles are permitted for children on Shabbos or Yom Tov. If one is unsure whether a specific puzzle is permitted, it should be shown to a Halachic authority.
- **Is there a Shabbos concern with games that usually involve writing for scoring or game play?**
 - It is not permitted to play games which usually involve writing, even if one will not write while playing on Shabbos.
- **Can games which utilize play money, such as Monopoly, be played on Shabbos?**
 - Using play money is not prohibited on Shabbos and Yom Tov. However, care must be taken not to transgress borer while handling the various bills.
- **Is playing with a Rubik's Cube permitted?**
 - It is permitted to play with a classic Rubik's Cube, which only has colored tiles. However, using a Rubik's Cube on which the tiles form a picture or word would be a violation of kesiva (writing).
- **What about Silly Putty, Play Dough, Slime, Kinetic Sand and other such play substances?**
 - These types of materials are prohibited on Shabbos and Yom Tov due to the prohibition of mimareiach (smoothing).
- **Is it permitted to make snowballs or build a snowman on Shabbos?**
 - Making snowballs or building a snowman is prohibited due to the prohibition of boneh (building).
- **May children play with noise-making toys such as whistles, bells or rattles?**
 - Children should not play with toys that make noise. However, an infant may play with rattles.
- **Is it permitted for children to play with windup cars?**
 - It is permitted to play with toy windup cars on Shabbos or Yom Tov, and even to wind them, because the car is usable without winding. If the car makes a loud noise or generates sparks, it is not permitted.
- **May toys be cleaned up on Shabbos or Yom Tov?**
 - Toys may only be cleaned up if the cleaning is for a Shabbos purpose. (An example would be if the mess is disrupting use of the room.) However, it is not permitted to clean up in preparation for Motzaei Shabbos.
 - While cleaning up, it is important to avoid sorting toys that are not easily distinguishable. If such toys become mixed together, they should be placed together in the container and sorted after Shabbos. Toys that are easily distinguishable and not intermingled may be put into their correct boxes. If one is unsure, he or she should err on the side of caution.

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