

Preparing Your House for Pesach

Based on the Halachic Rulings of Rabbi Shlomo Gissinger Shlita

Cleaning for Pesach

Pesach is the Celebration of Freedom. Unfortunately, for too many women the preparation for this holiday is anything but freedom; it is a real-life nightmare. Cleaning...cleaning...and...more...cleaning. The average housewife does 75% more cleaning than is required according to the Halacha. Spring cleaning should be done **after** Pesach!!!

As the prohibition of chametz on Pesach is very serious, the Shulchan Aruch: The Code of Jewish Law, and later Halachic opinions (the Chafetz Chaim in Shaar Hatziyon OC 442:52), commend the practice of holy Jews who proudly uphold various stringencies that have been passed down from generation to generation in regards to Pesach. Nevertheless, some of the excessive cleaning practices adopted by many people today are not an actual continuation of these holy practices. Furthermore, one is not permitted to perform stringencies when they infringe upon and undermine basic Torah obligations. Women are obligated in all the mitzvos of the Seder, as men are. They also have a mitzvah of enjoying the holiday (Simchas Yom Tov). How can these mitzvos be accomplished when women are totally washed out, exhausted and too tense from the excessive cleaning to even maintain a conversation! We must maintain our priorities!

Introduction: The obligation to search for, and destroy Chametz, applies to Chametz which is the size of one complete *k'zayis* or more. A *k'zayis* is approximately the volume of one ounce. A standard whisky cup holds one ounce. There is a more stringent Halachic opinion that chametz which is even less than a *k'zayis* is problematic unless it is rendered unfit for human consumption. In consideration of that opinion, it is recommended, not required (where applicable) to apply an ammonia/water solution to the chametz, thus rendering it inedible.

Please note: Do not confuse this Halacha with the more stringent prohibition of consuming even a crumb of chametz.

Items & Places That Do Not Need To Be Cleaned For Pesach

The following items need **not** be cleaned for Pesach: Windows, walls, carpets, ceilings, doors and doorknobs. Neither do linens, bedspreads, curtains, towels, and fresh dish towels. For those who sell their chametz; all pots, pans, dishes, flatware, appliances (e.g. mixer, grinder, toaster, microwave etc) and toys, which are being stored away for Pesach, do not require cleaning.

The closet/room where chametz and/or chametz utensils are being locked up does not need to be cleaned for Pesach. Rather, merely take a quick assessment of the approximate amount/value of chametz present there, so that it may be properly listed among items being sold as chametz.

Items & Places That Do Need To Be Cleaned For Pesach

Clothing: The cleaning of clothing can be divided into the following categories:

1. Pockets of adult clothing that never contained chametz - do not need to be checked at all.
2. Pockets of adult clothing, which during the year may have occasionally contained chametz, and which will be worn on Pesach - should be emptied of food and crumbs. Alternatively, if one resolves not to put any food in pockets during Pesach - then the pockets need only to be frisked for either edible crumbs of chametz (not little crumbs mixed with lint and dust), or a "considerable amount" of chametz.
3. Pockets of children's clothing, which will be worn on Pesach - should be emptied of food and crumbs.
4. Pockets of other clothing, which will not be worn on Pesach - need only to be frisked for either edible crumbs of chametz (not little crumbs mixed with lint and dust), or a "considerable amount" of chametz.
5. Pockets of other clothing which will not to be worn on Pesach, and which are being locked up and sold along with the chametz - do not need to be checked at all.

Should one decide on Pesach to wear clothing on Pesach whose pockets may have contained chametz, and whose pockets were not thoroughly cleaned - then extreme care must be taken not to put any food into the pockets.

Note: A "considerable amount" means a *k'zayis*, which as stated earlier is approximately the volume of one ounce.

Toys: The cleaning of toys can be divided into the following categories:

1. Toys which will be used on Pesach, and which may contain a "considerable amount" of chametz - must be cleaned.
2. Toys which will be used on Pesach, and which usually do not contain a "considerable amount" of chametz, but rather have small particles of dirty chametz stuck to them - may be used as-is on Pesach.
3. Toys which will be used on Pesach, and which usually do not contain a "considerable amount" of chametz but have small particles of chametz stuck to them that appear to be in edible condition - although according to the majority of Halachic opinions the toys may be used as-is, care must be taken not to place these toys on areas where food is placed (e.g. tables, countertops etc.). Furthermore, according to the more stringent Halachic opinion stated earlier (in the introduction), the small particles of

food should be rendered inedible. This may be accomplished in the following manner: Toys which are waterproof - may be soaked (in a tub) in an ammonia/water solution for a short time and then rinsed. This will render the food inedible. The toys may be dried and used as-is. Toys which cannot be immersed in water - can either be wiped down with a sponge moistened with an ammonia/water solution, or if that is not possible, the chametz particles should be physically removed.

4. Toys which will not be used on Pesach, and which are being locked up and sold along with the chametz - do not need to be cleaned at all.

Seforim/Books: Since the only crumbs that might be present in Seforim or books are less than a *k'zayis*, they do not have to be cleaned. However, care must be taken not to place them on areas where food is being placed (e.g. tables, countertops etc). Nevertheless, to avoid any problems, seforim or books which commonly have crumbs in them (e.g. benchers etc) should be cleaned or sealed away with the chametz.

Preparing the Kitchen

Refrigerator/Freezer: Should be washed with an ammonia/water solution and may then be used without lining the shelves with paper/aluminum foil etc.

Range top: Clean thoroughly then light flames for ten minutes. Cover the area between the burners with aluminum foil. Note: The drip rings/pans need only be cleaned not koshered.

Oven - Self Cleaning: Set the self clean at highest setting for one hour.

Oven - Non Self Cleaning: Apply acid solution (e.g. Easy Off), rinse, then light for one hour at the highest setting.

Microwave: Clean thoroughly (especially around fan area) then don't use for twenty four hours. Boil water in the microwave for several minutes so that it will fill with vapor. Since the validity of *kashering* plastic for Pesach is questionable, use only when Pesach food is covered (e.g. in a plastic bag).

Sink: Clean thoroughly then don't use with very hot water (i.e. too hot to touch with ones bare hand) for twenty four hours and then perform *Iruy* (i.e. pour boiling water) on entire surface including the spout.

Counter tops: Clean thoroughly with ammonia/water solution then either cover with aluminum foil etc. or perform *Iruy* and use as is. Hot Pesach food should not be placed directly (i.e. without dish or container) on counter.

Pantry and Cabinets: Clean thoroughly with ammonia/water solution and then use as is (i.e. without lining with paper etc.)

Food and Non-Food Products

Introduction: There are three prohibitions relating to Chametz on Pesach: 1) Consumption, 2) Deriving Benefit (e.g., feeding a pet chametz), 3) Ownership. These prohibitions only apply to chametz which is edible and/or has the ability to sour (leaven) other dough. However, chametz which is inedible, and is has lost its power to sour (leaven) other dough, although it may not be ingested, it may be owned and even used.

Thus, the following products (whose chametz ingredients are inedible, and have lost their ability to sour (leaven) other dough) may be used on Pesach without any Kosher for Pesach labels:

All cosmetics; e.g. creams, ointments, powders, nail polish, lipstick, blush, eye shadow, deodorants, hair spray, shampoos, perfumes etc). Note: When not using a new lipstick check old one for crumbs.

All cleaning agents; e.g. soaps both solid and liquid, dish washing soap, laundry detergent, waxes, polishes etc.

All paper goods, plastic ware, aluminum foil etc.

In Summation: The halachos presented herein are basic Halacha as per valid, accepted, Halachic opinion. All stringencies are labeled as such.

Have a Kosher & Meaningful Pesach