

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): GENERAL RULES

THE FIVE AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA)

The Five After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona)

There are five Bracha Achrona blessings on food:

- Al HaMichya
- Al HaGefen
- Al Ha'Eitz
- Borei Nefashot
- Birkat HaMazon.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): LEVELS

Levels of After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona)

Like fore-blessings, say the highest level of after-blessing (bracha achrona) that applies.

NOTE Although borei nefashot will cover many foods (at least, after the fact), it does NOT cover bread, wine, or mezonot.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): MINIMUM MEASUREMENTS

Introduction to After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Minimum Measurements

To say any after-blessing/bracha achrona (al ha'michya, al ha'gafen, al ha'eitz, borei nefashot, or birkat ha'mazon), you must:

- Eat at least the minimum volume (1.3 fl. oz.--39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of solid food within four minutes, or
- Drink at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of liquid within 30 seconds.

NOTE With hot foods, especially liquids, you are unlikely to be able to swallow a minimum amount in the required time in order to qualify for the after-blessing (bracha achrona).

If Did Not Eat Minimum

Do not say bracha achrona if you did not eat 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml) within four minutes.

If Did Not Drink Minimum

Do not say bracha achrona if you did not drink 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of any potable liquid within 30 seconds.

NOTE You may not combine the volume of solid food to liquid food or liquid food to solid food that you ate and drank in order to make the minimum volume for an after-blessing.

If Did Not Eat or Drink Minimum

Size: How To Calculate

Ounces: Weight or Volume

The minimum quantity for saying after-blessings is based on volume, not weight. If you eat a pack of pretzels whose volume is 1.3 fl. oz., even though the label says it only weighs 0.5 oz., you would say an after-blessing of al ha'michya.

Figuring Volume

Figuring Volume: Non-Mezonot Foods

You may not include the volume of fish or meat or other foods eaten together with bread or matza in order to reach a total volume of 1 fl. oz., which is required for saying the after-blessing of birkat ha'mazon. However, you may combine the volumes in order to say *borei nefashot*.

Figuring Volume: Unswallowed Pits/Seeds

When eating foods with seeds or pits (olives, pomegranates, etc.), do not include unswallowed seeds or pits to reach the 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) minimum volume needed to say an after-blessing. You may include only what you have swallowed.

D'Oraita Cases

For d'oraita cases (halachot from the Torah), such as eating matza at seder or drinking wine for kiddush, we use a more stringent minimum measure:

- Eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (56 ml) of solid food within four minutes, or
- Drink at least 4 fl. oz. (119 ml) of liquid within 30 seconds.

Timing

When To Start Counting

You may start counting the period of four minutes (for eating at least 1.3 fl. oz.) or 30 seconds (for drinking at least 3.3 fl. oz.) any time after the fore-blessing as long as it is continuous from when you first swallow until you have swallowed the minimum amount.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): TIME LIMITS

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): TIME LIMITS AND SATIATION STATUS

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Satiation Status: General Rules

After eating or drinking the required amounts, you may say bracha achrona (including birkat ha'mazon) as long as:

- You are still satiated after having been hungry and eaten, OR
- You were not satiated after eating and it is less than 72 minutes since you finished eating.

REASON We say the effects of food last for at least 72 minutes and that 72-minute period overrides becoming hungry again even after having been satiated.

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Satiation Status: Hunger Situations

SITUATION You were hungry.
You ate and were satiated.
You are not yet hungry again.

WHAT TO DO You may say bracha achrona without any time limit, until you get hungry again

SITUATION You were hungry.
You ate but were not satiated.
You are still hungry.

WHAT TO DO You may say bracha achrona for up to 72 minutes after having stopped eating.

SITUATION You were not hungry, but you ate.

WHAT TO DO

- If you ate enough that you became satiated and now you are hungry again:

You can say after-blessing for up to 72 minutes after you finished eating.

- If you ate enough to be satiated and are not yet hungry again:
You may say an after-blessing for up to 72 minutes OR until you are hungry again, whichever comes later.
- If you ate but did not become satiated and are still hungry:
You can say after-blessing for 72 minutes after you finished eating.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): TIME LIMITS AND FALLING ASLEEP

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Falling Asleep for more than 30 Minutes

If you fell asleep for more than 30 minutes in the middle of a meal:

Step 1: Wash your hands the Three-Times Method to remove the tum'a of your sleep.

Step 2a: To Continue Eating

To continue eating in this case, since the previous blessings and food are no longer relevant (due to hesech da'at), you may:

- Wash again and say ha'motzi again, and then say birkat ha'mazon, OR
- Eat other items with a fore-blessing and after-blessing (since your previous eating is finished).

Step 2b: If You Are Finished Eating

- Say birkat ha'mazon if you are:
 - Finished eating, and
 - Not hungry again, after having been satiated at the meal.
- Do not say birkat ha'mazon if you are
 - Finished eating, and
 - Hungry again (after having been satiated at the meal), as the original snack or meal is irrelevant to any after-blessing now.

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Falling Asleep for less than 30 Minutes

If you slept less than 30 minutes, you do not need to wash; you may:

- Continue eating your meal, or
- Say birkat ha'mazon (as long as you had already eaten at least 1.9 fl. oz., or 56 ml, of bread within 4 minutes).

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CORRESPONDENCE WITH FORE-BLESSINGS (BRACHA RISHONA)

Correspondence between Fore- and After-Blessings

There is no essential connection between fore-blessings and after-blessings.

EXAMPLES Rice

The fore-blessing is borei minei mezonot, so you might expect the after-blessing to be al ha'michya. But the correct after-blessing is borei nefashot.

Apple

The fore-blessing is borei pri ha'eitz, so you might expect the after-blessing to be al ha'eitz. But the correct after-blessing is borei nefashot.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): INCORRECT

Correct After-Blessing after Incorrect After-Blessing

SITUATION You ate or drank mezonot, wine, grape juice, or any of the Five Special Fruits.

You said the incorrect after-blessing.

WHAT TO DO You must still say the correct after-blessing after the incorrect one.

Correct After-Blessing after Incorrect Fore-Blessing

SITUATION You said an incorrect or too-general fore-blessing over food (even *she'hakol*--which does, *b'di'avad*, cover all foods, including bread, wine, the Five Special Fruits, and mezonot). Or you forgot to say the fore-blessing.

WHAT TO DO You must still say the more-specific, correct after-blessing, including birkat ha'mazon when appropriate.

REASON You must still say the correct after-blessing even though you said the incorrect fore-blessing.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): INCOMPLETE

Incomplete After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona)

You must repeat the after-blessing for mezonot, wine/grape juice, or any of the Five Special Fruits if you ate items from more than one of those categories, said the after-blessing for just one of them, and forgot the other.

Example

SITUATION You ate mezonot and some figs, said al ha'michya, and forgot to add the words for al ha'eitz.

WHAT TO DO You must say the after-blessing al ha'eitz.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): SEQUENTIAL

After-Blessings If Snack, then New Meal

If you said a fore-blessing and ate a snack, but then decided to eat bread and a full meal:

- If your meal will not contain any foods that have the same after-blessing as your snack--
 - Say the snack's after-blessing, and then
 - Wash your hands and say ha'motzi.
- If your meal will contain foods with the same fore-blessing as your snack (even the same food as your snack)—
 - Do not say the snack's after-blessing.
 - Wash your hands and say ha'motzi.

NOTE Wash and say ha'motzi if you will be eating any amount of bread--even less than 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) within four minutes and even if it will take you more than four minutes to eat it (in which case, although you say ha'motzi, you do not say any after-blessing, including birkat ha'mazon).

NOTE Say al netilat yadayim only if you intend to eat at least 1.9 fl. oz. (59 ml) within four minutes.

EXCEPTION If you have eaten mezonot (and even if you will not eat any more mezonot with your meal), do not say al ha'michya. Just wash your hands, say ha'motzi, and eat your meal.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CHANGING LOCATION

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CHANGING LOCATION: INSIDE TO OUTSIDE, OUTSIDE TO INSIDE

After-Blessings: Start Meal Inside, Intend To End Outside

You may start a meal inside the house and finish outside, or the reverse, if that was your original intention. If that was not your original intention, consult a rabbi.

After-Blessings: Start Snack Inside, Did Not Intend To End Outside

If you were eating a snack inside a building and had not planned to continue eating outside but then decided to eat outside, you must say a new fore-blessing once you are outside.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CHANGING LOCATION: BREAD OR MEZONOT

After-Blessings: Changing Location: Continuing To Eat Bread or Mezonot

Because bread or mezonot REQUIRES you to say an after-blessing at the place where you ate it, you are considered to NOT have had an interruption of thought (hesech da'at) when you move and eat more bread or mezonot at the new place, and you may say the after-blessing at the new place.

AFTER-BLESSINGS (BRACHA ACHRONA): CHANGING LOCATION: TRAVELING

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Changing Location: Traveling

When traveling, the proper practice is to:

- Finish eating where you begin eating, or
- Intend, when saying the fore-blessing, to continue eating while traveling.

EXCEPTIONS Even if you did not intend to continue eating along the way, you may say the after-blessing wherever you are if:

- You are already involved in doing a mitzva, or
- If you will incur a large loss of money, or
- By the time you would return to where you ate, it would be past the latest time to say the after-blessing.

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Changing Location: Food within View

SITUATION You eat one item outdoors, then eat food from another category inside your car, which is within view of where you ate the first food.

WHAT TO DO You may say the after-blessings for both foods while in your car (or both outside of your car), even if it is a food that normally would require you to return to the place at which you ate it.

After-Blessings (Bracha Achrona): Changing Location: Did Not Intend To Continue Eating

SITUATION You did not, at the time you said the fore-blessing, intend to continue eating along the way. You then ate at least 1.3 fl. oz. (39 ml, or 1/6 cup) of bread or mezonot within four minutes.

WHAT TO DO When you say the after-blessing, you should return to where you began eating. However, if you continued eating mezonot or bread while traveling, you may say the after-blessing in either place.

NOTE It is the proper practice to say a new fore-blessing (since you did not intend to continue eating along the way when you began eating) in the vehicle in which you are

traveling. But even if you did not say a new fore-blessing, you may still say the after-blessing in the vehicle.

After-Blessings: Changing Location: Inside Vehicle, Outside Vehicle, Return

SITUATION You are traveling (driving, riding in a bus, etc.), and you stop and get out of the vehicle in order to eat part of a meal or snack:

WHAT TO DO

- If, when you said the fore-blessing, you had consciously intended to return to the vehicle and continue eating either along the way or at the next stop, you may say the after-blessing wherever you are when you finish eating.
- If, when you said the fore-blessing, you had not consciously intended to return to the vehicle and continue eating while traveling, it is assumed that you will continue to eat and you do not need to say a new fore-blessing.
- If you intended NOT to continue eating in your car or along the way, you need to say a new fore-blessing in the vehicle.