

# TUM'A: REMOVAL

## TUM'A: REMOVAL: GENERAL CONCEPTS

### WHAT REMOVES TUM'A

#### Minimum Amount of Water To Remove Tum'a

The minimum amount of water to remove tum'a (ritual impurity) is 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml, or 1 revi'it) total, for both hands.

**NOTE** By starting with at least one revi'it per hand when washing, we avoid problems of transferring tum'a to other people or utensils. If you start with only one revi'it and pour enough to cover each hand from that single revi'it, you will remove the tum'a from your hands, but the water that remains on your hands will still be *tamei*. If you then touch a washing cup, the *tamei* water will remain on the cup and be transferred to the person who touches it next. It is recommended to use at least one revi'it per hand to avoid such problems.

#### Tum'a and Snow

Snow removes tum'a but requires 480 *se'ah* of snow. This is easily achieved by plunging your hands into a field or yard full of snow!

### WHAT DOES NOT REMOVE TUM'A

#### Tum'a and Moist Towelette

A moist towelette (baby wipe, alcohol wipes, etc.) does not remove tum'a.

#### Tum'a and Dirt, Ashes, Sand

“Washing” hands with dirt, ashes, or sand does not remove tum'a.

## TUM'A: REMOVAL: HOW TO WASH HANDS

### HANDWASHING FOR TUM'A: GENERAL CONCEPTS

#### Tum'a and Drying Hands before Handwashing

To wash hands from tum'a or all other purposes, you do not need to dry your hands first--except before washing for bread, and then ONLY if the person who washed hands before you:

- Did not use a revi'it of water (per hand) to wash his/her hands, AND
- Only poured once on each hand.

In sum, you almost never need to dry your hands before washing them!

However, if the person before you had tum'a on his or her hands and poured only once, the tum'a will be transferred from his/her hands to the cup.

#### Tum'a and From What To Pour

When washing your hands using the One-Time Method, in all cases except when washing for bread, here is what to use:

- Best: Cup that holds at least a revi'it of water.
- Next Best: Wash hands from a spigot within 12” of the ground, turning the spigot off and on between hands.

- Third Choice: If the spigot is more than 12” above the ground, simply hold your hands under a regular faucet in the flow of water so that your hands get wet all over. No need to turn the water on and off.

**NOTE** This is a *b'di'avad* case.

- Fourth Choice: If there is no water, say whatever blessings you need to say anyway (for example, *asher yatzar*) rather than not saying the blessing at all. You will still have the tum'a on your hands (but you should rub your hands on cloth of clothing first).

**NOTE** This does NOT apply to washing before eating bread or to any cases where you must wash using the *Three-Times Method*. Removing tum'a in these cases requires a cup.

**NOTE** If you need to wash your hands after using the toilet, there is no need to go 18 minutes to find the water, (unlike the requirement for washing for bread).

### Minimum Amount of Hand Coverage

When washing to remove tum'a, the ideal is to pour water over your hand up to your wrist; the minimum is to pour up to the knuckles adjacent to the palms of your hands.

**EXCEPTIONS** On Yom Kippur and Tish'a B'Av, wash only up to your knuckles (but if you accidentally pour water further up on your hand, it is not a problem).

### Tum'a and Which Hand To Wash First

To remove tum'a from hands, it is preferable to wash the right hand first.

**NOTE** If you washed the left first, it is OK and you do not need to rewash the left hand.

### Tum'a and Pouring Backhanded

To wash hands from tum'a, there is no problem with pouring water backhanded.

### Tum'a and Hot Water

You may wash your hands with hot water for any ritual purpose except for mayim achronim.

### Tum'a and Where To Wash

You may wash your hands inside a bathroom for any purpose, even before eating bread.

**NOTE** You may not say any blessings while inside the bathroom.

## HANDWASHING: ONE-TIME METHOD

### ONE-TIME METHOD: WHEN TO WASH

#### When To Use the One-Time Handwashing Method

Use the One-Time Method to wash hands from tum'a:

Before...

- Eating bread.
- Prayer services.

After...

- Cutting fingernails or toenails.
- Getting a haircut or shaving.
- Giving blood.
- Urinating or defecating.
- Scratching the hair on your head.

- Touching leather shoes (not after touching synthetic or cloth shoes).
- Touching normally covered parts of your body.
- Touching a pet.

## ONE-TIME METHOD: HOW TO WASH

### How To Wash Hands the One-Time Method

To wash hands the One-Time Method:

- Fill the washing cup with at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of water.
- Pour enough water (may be as little as 1.3 fl. oz.--39 ml, or 1/6 cup) from the washing cup to completely cover your entire first hand (either hand may be first but it is proper to wash your right hand first).
- Pour enough water to completely cover the second hand.

**NOTE** You do not need to pour any more than that or to break up the revi'it into two pours.

### Drying Hands after Washing for Bread

When washing your hands before eating bread, the ideal procedure is to wash, say the blessing al netilat yadayim, and then dry your hands (since the drying is part of the washing procedure). Many people have the custom of pouring water onto each hand twice but only before eating bread.

**NOTE** If you washed your hands, dried them, and then said the blessing al netilat yadayim, b'di'avad you are covered. But if you washed your hands and dried them but did not yet say the blessing al netilat yadayim, you should touch a normally covered part of your body, wash your hands again, say al netilat yadayim, and go on to say ha'motzi on bread.

## HANDWASHING: THREE-TIMES METHOD

### THREE-TIMES METHOD: WHEN TO WASH

#### When To Use the Three-Times Method

Use the Three-Times Method to wash hands from tum'a after...

- Sleeping 30 minutes or more,
- Intercourse,
- Touching a dead person,
- Being in a building with a dead person,
- Being in a funeral procession,
- Visiting a cemetery.

These are the only times we wash the three-times way.

### THREE-TIMES METHOD: HOW TO WASH

#### How To Wash Hands Using the Three-Times Method

To wash hands the Three-Times Method:

- Fill the washing cup with at least 3.3 fl. oz. (99 ml) of water for the first pair of pours.
- Pour enough water (may be as little as 1.3 fl. oz.--39 ml, or 1/6 cup) from the washing cup to completely cover your entire first hand (either hand may be first, but it is proper to wash your right

hand first).

- Pour enough water to completely cover the second hand.
- Repeat the pouring twice more, alternating hands, until each hand has been completely covered a total of three times.

**NOTE** There is no minimum required volume for the subsequent pours, and you may refill the cup in order to have enough water to cover each hand for all three pairs of pours.

## TUM'A: REMOVAL: WASHING CUP

### Tum'a: Washing Cup Spout

If a washing utensil has a spout that is lower than the rim, pour only from the spout. If the spout is higher than the rim, pour off of the side or back, opposite the lowest edge level.

**REASON** The principle is that water may only be poured from the lowest level that can hold water.

### Tum'a: Squeeze Bottle as Washing Cup

You may wash your hands for any *halachic* purpose using a squeeze bottle.

## TUM'A: REMOVAL: WASHING WATER

### Tum'a: Evaporated Washing Water

Washing water does not have any residual tum'a once it has evaporated.

### Tum'a: Reusing Washing Water

You may re-use washing water for other purposes (ex., to irrigate plants) EXCEPT for water used after waking from sleep and the other three-time handwashing categories (which have higher levels of tum'a).

### Tum'a: Praying if No Water for Handwashing

If there is no water to wash hands, even after sleeping, you still say blessings and prayers. You should say asher yatzar even if you can't wash, but do not say al netilat yadayim in shacharit!

**NOTE** Even if you do not have water with which to wash your hands, you should wipe them off on a towel or some substance that can rub off any physical impurities that you may have gotten on them while sleeping.

## TUM'A: REMOVAL: TOVELING (TEVILA)

## TUM'A: REMOVAL: MIKVA

## MIKVA IN NATURE

## MIKVA IN NATURE: GENERAL CONCEPTS

### Mikva in Nature: Rabbinic Guidance

Rabbinic guidance is recommended when using a river, lake, or spring as a mikva due to:

- Problems of mud, dirt, or sand, and
- Difficulty in checking if the person is fully underwater,
- It might not be a kosher mikva.

**NOTE** This section applies to the immersion of both utensils and people, since the same principles apply.

## Mikva in Nature: Source of Water

Spring water, whether moving or stationary, is a kosher mikva.

Rain water is only a kosher mikva once it is stationary (just sitting in a pool, not flowing anywhere).

In neither case may the water enter a constructed mikva through a "*kli*," which includes being carried in a bucket or via pipes with bends and other places for water to collect. In the case of a pipe that may not be a *kli*, consult a rabbi.

## Mikva in Nature: Measurements

A kosher mikva in nature:

- Must be 40 se'ah (about 192 gallons);
- Has no minimum depth;
- May be murky or muddy (but must be such that a cow would drink it); and
- May not drop in level more than 2 inches (3.1 cm) within 24 hours.

## LAKE AS MIKVA

### Lakes or Ponds as Mikva

A lake or pond may be a kosher mikva if it is:

- Fed from ground water (percolates through the soil); or
- Primarily fed from a spring; or
- Primarily fed from rain.

**NOTE** The rain must run into the lake or pond directly. If the water enters, or drains out, via pipes, it is not a kosher mikva. However, if the lake or pond gets rain from run-off from streets through pipes, it might be a kosher mikva. Consult a rabbi.

**NOTE** A lake or pond that drains out through a river or stream may not be a kosher mikva. Consult a rabbi.

**NOTE** A lake or pond into which a river or stream empties, might be a kosher mikva. Consult a rabbi.

**NOTE** A lake or pond with a river running into it and then out of it is considered a river. For immersing in a river, see [Rivers as Kosher Mikva](#).

## OCEAN AS MIKVA

### Oceans as Mikva

All oceans and seas are kosher mikvas, but other salty water (defined as water that a cow would not drink) is not kosher for immersion.

**NOTE** A rabbi should be consulted before using an ocean for immersion since there are other issues involved.

## RAINWATER AS MIKVA

### Rainwater as Mikva

Rainwater only purifies when it is stationary.

## RIVER AS MIKVA

### Rivers as Kosher Mikva

Rivers are only kosher mikvas when spring-fed. A river is a kosher mikva if it exists year round (not like a wadi, which is frequently dry and only flows after rainfall).

### Hot Springs as Mikva

Here are requirements for a hot spring as a mikva:

1. The temperature may not be above 98° F.
2. If the spring and immersing area are separate, any pipes used to bring water into the immersing area from the spring must be at least 3" in diameter. Consult a rabbi.
3. The mikva area must contain at least 40 se'ah of the spring water.
4. The mikva area must be hewn of rock or poured concrete, etc., but may not be prefabricated in one piece, like a hot tub.
5. The water may not reach the mikva area via a pump.

## SPRING AS MIKVA

### Spring as Mikva

Springs are always kosher mikvas as long as the volume in the place of immersion is at least 40 se'ah (192 gallons).

## TUM'A: REMOVAL: TOVELING: PERSON

### Impurity that Mikva Does Not Remove

Normally covered parts of the body always have some type of impurity, even after immersion, and a mikva does not remove that impurity.

## TUM'A: REMOVAL: TOVELING: UTENSILS

## INTRODUCTION TO TOVELING: UTENSILS

### Introduction to Tovelung: Utensils

Tevila is the Hebrew word for immersion. You must tovel (immerse in a mikva or other halachically purifying water) new utensils made of metal or other materials that require tevila unless you know that they were:

- Made by a Jew,
- Sold by a Jew, and
- Not owned by a non-Jew in between.

### Tovelung: Utensils: How To Tovel

To tovel a utensil, you may go to any kosher natural mikva (see section on natural mikvas) or to a mikvat keilim (a small mikva for utensils, often attached to the outside of a regular mikva building). To tovel several items, some of which require a blessing and some on which there is doubt whether a blessing is necessary, say the blessing over the item that requires the blessing and have in mind that the blessing will cover all the rest of your items.

Remember to remove all stickers, rust, etc., before you begin. Nail polish remover may help with stubborn stickers. Say the blessing *al tevilat keilim* and then let the item free fall through the water. Unlike with *hagala*, during which the item may be immersed in sections, when you tovel a utensil, the entire item must be in contact with the water at the same time, even if only for an instant.

### Tovelung: Utensils: What Gets Toveled?

**NOTE** The main halacha applies to metal utensils that will be used repeatedly.

Say the blessing *al tevilat keilim* on metal or glass items--including Pyrex, Duralex, and Corelle--that come in contact with food. Items that require tovelung include:

- Bowls
- Cups

- Forks
- Knives
- Pans
- Plates
- Pots
- Spoons
- Storage containers (only if they are brought to the table).

The below chart is copied with permission from the Star-K ([www.star-k.org](http://www.star-k.org)):

<u>Utensil</u>	<u>Tevila</u> <u>Guideline</u>	<u>Utensil</u>	<u>Tevila</u> <u>Guideline</u>
Aluminum Pans, Disposable <i>if intended to be used more than once</i>	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>	Meat Tenderizer Hammer, Metal	No <u>Tevila</u>
Aluminum Pans, Disposable <i>to be used only once</i>	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>	Melamine	No <u>Tevila</u>
<u>Blech</u>	No <u>Tevila</u>	Metal Cutlery	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>
Blender with metal blade on bottom	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>	Metal Flour and Sugar Storage Canisters	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
Bone	No <u>Tevila</u>	Metal Pots Coated with Teflon, Enamel or Plastic	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
Brush, Pastry	No <u>Tevila</u>	Metal Spoon Specifically for Medicine	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
Brush for Grill, Metal	No <u>Tevila</u>	Microwave Turntable, Glass	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
Can Opener	No <u>Tevila</u>	Mixer Beaters	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
Cans, Reusable Empty <i>if opened by a Yehudi</i>	No <u>Tevila</u>	Paper	No <u>Tevila</u>
China, Bone	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>	Peeler, Vegetable	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>
China, Glazed	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>	Plastic	No <u>Tevila</u>
Colander, Metal	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>	Porcelain Enamel	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
Cookie Cutters, Metal	No <u>Tevila</u>	Racks, Cooling	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
Cookie Sheets, Metal	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>	Racks, Oven	No <u>Tevila</u>
Cork Screw	No <u>Tevila</u>	Rolling Pins <i>Metal or Wood</i>	No <u>Tevila</u>
Corningware	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>	Sandwich Maker	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>
Crockpot Ceramic Insert	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>	Silicone	No <u>Tevila</u>
Crockpot Glass Lid	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>	Sink Racks, Stainless Steel	No <u>Tevila</u>
Crockpot Outside Metal Shell	No <u>Tevila</u>	Spatula, Metal	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>

Dish Rack, Metal	No <u>Tevila</u>	<del>Stoneware</del> w/o <u>Brocha</u>
Dishes, Ceramic	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>	<del>Non-Tevila</del> , Non- Glazed
Earthenware, Non-Glazed <i>Dull Finish, e.g. Flower Pot</i>	No <u>Tevila</u>	<del>Non-Tevila</del> Utensils, Glass <i>not brought to the table</i>
George Foreman Grill	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>	<del>Stoneware</del>
Glass <i>(including Pyrex, Duraalex &amp; Corelle)</i>	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u> Kettle, Corelle
Grater, Metal <i>used for foods that are ready to eat, eg, apples, onions</i>	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>	<del>Toaster</del> w/o <u>Brocha</u> <i>which will not break</i>
Grater, Metal <i>used only for foods that need further cooking, eg potatoes</i>	<u>Tevila</u> w/o <u>Brocha</u>	<del>Toaster</del> with <u>Brocha</u> Oven rack & tray <i>only</i>
Hamburger Maker	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>	<del>Non-Tevila</del> Metal
Hot Air Popcorn Maker, Metal	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>	<del>Waffle</del> with <u>Brocha</u> Iron
Hot Water Urn, Metal	<u>Tevila</u> with <u>Brocha</u>	<del>Warmer</del> Tray
Knife, Arts & Crafts	No <u>Tevila</u>	<del>Wood</del> <u>Tevila</u>
Knife Sharpener	No <u>Tevila</u>	<del>Wooden</del> w/o <u>Brocha</u> Cask with Metal Straps
Meat Thermometer	No <u>Tevila</u>	

## TOVELING: UTENSILS: PARTS

### Toveling: Utensils: Stickers

Before immersing a food utensil in a mikva, remove anything attached to its surfaces.

**SITUATION** A sticker or something similar is found on a plate or other utensil after tevila.

### WHAT TO DO

- If the sticker is less than half of the surface area and does not bother you by being there, the tevila is valid.



- If the sticker interferes with your use of the utensil or if you just want it removed, it must be removed and the tevila must be repeated.

### Toveling: Utensils: Electrical Cord or Heater

A utensil that requires immersion in a mikva should be immersed even if the utensil is connected to an electrical cord or heater, unless by immersing it you will ruin the entire appliance.

### Toveling: Lid

You must tovel a cooking-utensil lid bought from a non-Jew before you use the lid.

### Toveling a Disposable Aluminum Pan

If a disposable aluminum pan will be used once, tovel it without a blessing. If a disposable aluminum pan will be used more than once, tovel it with a blessing (al tevilat keilim). Even if you will line it with a double layer of foil, still tovel it.

## TOVELING: UTENSILS: MIXED MATERIALS

### Toveling: Mixed Materials

When toveling a utensil that is partly made of metal (which requires tevila) and partly made of plastic, wood, or another material that does not require tevila, you must dip all parts of the utensil into the mikva, even the parts that would not require tevila on their own.

## TOVELING: UTENSILS: KASHER OR TOVEL FIRST?

### Toveling: Utensils: Kasher or Tovel First?

If you have a non-kosher food utensil, kasher it before you immerse it in a mikva (tevila).

## TOVELING: UTENSILS: JEWS AND NON-JEWS

### Giving a Toveled Utensil to another Jew

If you toveled a utensil and gave it to another Jew, the Jew does not have to tovel it again.

### Giving a Toveled Utensil to a Non-Jew for Repair

If you give a utensil to a non-Jew for repair or to have a new part added, consult a rabbi.

### Toveling: Utensils: Borrowing Back Un-Toveled Utensils from Non-Jew

Do not use utensils bought from a non-Jew or made by non-Jew until you tovel them. Instead, you may give them to a non-Jew and borrow them back, but you may only do this for 24 hours.