

# Introduction to Jewish Festivals: Medicines

## Jewish Festivals: Medicines: When To Take

Medicine generally may not be used on the *d'oraita Jewish festival* days.

## Jewish Festivals: Medicine for Chronic Diseases

You may take medicine on *Jewish festivals* (whether *d'oraita* or *d'rabanan*) for:

- Chronic diseases, such as Parkinson's disease, or
- Any disease that affects your entire body.

## Jewish Festivals: Medicine for Non-Chronic Diseases

You may take medicine on *Jewish festivals* for non-chronic illnesses, if skipping one day will prevent cure. You may not take medicine for non-chronic illnesses if skipping a day will just delay your being cured (unless the disease affects your entire body--in which case, you may take the medicine).

## Jewish Festivals: Medicines: When To Take: D'Oraita Festival Days

Here are the *d'oraita Jewish festivals*:

- First day of *Sukkot*, *Passover*, and *Shavuot*
- Seventh day of *Passover*
- *Shmini Atzeret* (8th day of *Sukkot*)
- *Yom Kippur*
- Both days of *Rosh Hashana* (even though the second day is *d'rabanan*).

On these days, as well as on *d'rabanan Jewish festivals*, you:

- MUST take medicine whenever there is any question of a life-threatening disease or condition.
- MAY take medicine for a condition that affects the entire body (illness, weakness, etc.). Consult a *rabbi* if possible.

**EXCEPTION** You may not smear substances on skin UNLESS the illness is life-threatening, in which case even smearing is permitted.

- MAY use some medicines if only part of your body is affected by a non-life-threatening disease--consult a *rabbi*.

## Jewish Festivals: Medicines: When To Take: D'Rabanan Festival Days

You may take medicines for any reason on *d'rabanan Jewish festivals*--even medicines not allowed on the first day of *Jewish festivals*--except:

- Medicines that you smear on skin.
- If the *Jewish festival* falls on *Shabbat* (which can only be second day of *Shavuot*).

**NOTE** The *d'rabanan Jewish festivals* are the second day of *Jewish festivals* except *Rosh Hashana* (actually, the second day of *Rosh Hashana* IS *d'rabanan* but has the status of *d'oraita*), plus the last day of *Passover* and *Simchat Torah* outside of *Eretz Yisrael*.

## Jewish Festivals: Squeezing, Dabbing, Smearing

As on *Shabbat*, you may squeeze a tube of cream on *Jewish festivals*, but you might not be able to use the cream on the *Jewish festival* for other reasons—consult a *rabbi*.

**NOTE** Smearing creams or ointments is permitted only in life-threatening situations. Otherwise, you may not smear cream on skin on a Jewish festival (or Shabbat) even using a shinu'i such as using the back of your hand or a toe.

Dabbing is permitted, but only when you are permitted to use medicine.

**EXAMPLE**

You may use cream on a Jewish festival (and Shabbat) by dabbing (you may ONLY dab--you may not SMEAR cream) for a bee sting if it will affect the entire body. You may not use cream for a mosquito bite, since it is only a local irritation.