

# JEWISH FESTIVALS: MEDICINES

## INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH FESTIVALS: MEDICINES

### 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.

## JEWISH FESTIVALS: PAINKILLERS

### Jewish Festivals: When You May Take a Painkiller

You may take a painkiller on the first day of Jewish festivals if the pain:

- Affects your entire body, or
- Keeps you awake.

**NOTE** This also becomes the criterion for whether to take the pain killer during the daytime: if the pain you feel during the day would keep you awake if you were trying to sleep.

**NOTE** You may take painkillers without any restrictions on the second Jewish festival day (except Rosh Hashana).