



## COVID-19 and the Mikvah

We are writing with the guidance of our Poskim, Harav Hershel Schachter שליט"א, Harav Asher Weiss שליט"א, and Harav Modechai Willig שליט"א, concerning the issue of Mikvah use during the current pandemic.

While the unfailing dedication of Jewish women to this practice is profoundly inspiring, we must address its safety with the utmost seriousness, both for the sake of public health, and to allay fears.

Everyone must respect a woman's wish to delay her immersion in the Mikvah and resumption of intimacy until the pandemic has passed. The following is shared for the sake of those who wish to continue to access this sacred resource at this time.

We have approached this subject in consultation with our medical advisory panel, composed of Infectious Disease and Public Health specialists from across the country. With their guidance, the OU provides the recommendations and guidelines set forth below as necessary for a Mikvah to safely remain open. The situation continues to evolve at a rapid pace and thus these recommendations and guidelines are formulated based solely on currently available information and advice. These guidelines should be implemented in consultation with your local rabbi and medical advisors.

1. Strict screening of Mikvah staff and visitors for any symptoms or known exposure to COVID-19.
2. Strict implementation of social distancing protocols, ensuring no close human contact during the entire Mikvah visit.
3. Strict implementation of maximal hygienic standards for attendants and for cleaning of surfaces and rooms before and between visitors.
4. Strict maintenance of proper chlorination/bromination levels in the actual immersion pool, per CDC guidelines.

These conditions cannot be properly met in the conditions of a men's Mikvah, and so these should be uniformly closed during the pandemic.

Women's Mikvaot that wish to remain open to serve those who wish to access them, must strictly adhere to the specific protocols for both staff and users developed in

consultation with our medical advisory panel, designed to meet the four conditions enumerated above.

Mikvaot that are able to adhere strictly to these protocols may safely remain open.

Individuals who do not pass the screening process must respect the current processes that are put in place to protect public health.

As the Mikvah experience is understandably stressful under the current conditions, extra efforts should be made - by both attendants and users - to be patient, empathetic and supportive.

We pray that G-d speedily eradicate this plague from our midst, and allow all aspects of our lives, as individuals, families and communities, to be fully restored.

**Please click here for the recommended Mikvah protocols.** Please be mindful of the fact that the data available to us is ever-evolving and therefore, require us from time to time to update these policies. We note as well that individual communities may have specific circumstances that may warrant community-specific protocols.

