

PESACH CLEANING

Rabbi Meir Bulman

Pesach is meant to be a Yom Tov that is enjoyed by the ENTIRE family. Because of the vast amount of preparation that we do for Pesach, many find it a challenge to properly experience the Seder with our families and enjoy this special time. We are therefore presenting this concise guide to Pesach cleaning in the hope that it will help you streamline and prioritize your Pesach cleaning this year. As always, there will be a *shiur* for women covering the details of Pesach cleaning with more in depth explanations.

Feel free to call or text Rabbi Bulman: 607-743-6444.

General Guidelines

One is only required to look for *chametz* in places where one has at some point brought *chametz*. If there is an area in which nobody EVER went with *chametz*, no cleaning or checking for *chametz* is necessary. (For example: the high shelves in a closet that are used for long-term storage.) There is also NO NEED to move large pieces of furniture to clean or check underneath (provided they have not been moved for at least 30 days). In places that do have a chance of *chametz*, we do both *ביטול* (nullification), and *בדיקה* (searching) / *ביעור* (burning). We are concerned about *chametz* that is (a) the size of a teaspoon (*כזית*) even if not edible or (b) a whole edible food that can be eaten on its own, no matter how small it may be (such as a Cheerios™). *Chametz* crumbs are not a concern as they will be nullified and not eaten. There is a longstanding *chumrah* (stringency) to remove ALL *chametz* from one's home, even crumbs. However, it is preferable that one be rested for the Seder (especially *Magid*) than keep this *chumrah*. One need not CLEAN out dressers, closets etc. One need only look through them to see that there is no *chametz*.

Kitniyos

It is a good idea to have these types of food in the house in the days before Pesach since there is no issue of possessing it on Pesach (it doesn't matter if a child leaves it around); the only issue is eating it on Pesach.

Kitchen

The above guidelines are for the whole house except for the kitchen. One must be extra careful with *chametz* in the kitchen because even a miniscule crumb that ends up being mixed into food and eaten is forbidden. Practically speaking, areas above the counter are more problematic because gravity causes crumbs to fall down. Areas close to the floor are not as problematic because whatever may be there is unlikely to end up in our food. *Chametz* that cannot be removed from counters, appliances, walls, shelves, hard to reach places, etc. should be sprayed with an ammonia or bleach based cleaner. The *chametz* will then be *נפסל מאכילת כלב* (unfit for a dog) and *halachically* destroyed. Although many do not like to use harsh cleaners in their home, the point is to destroy the *chametz* not merely "clean it". ONLY a harsh cleaner can be effective for this purpose.

Refrigerator / Freezer

Clean thoroughly. Some have a *minhag* to line the shelves. Lining the shelves is not necessary, but it is a good idea to do so (leave holes in the lining to promote proper circulation). One who does not line their shelves should not put piping hot foods in the refrigerator. Use a caustic cleaner on hard-to-reach places.

- **Handles** - It's a good idea to cover handles of appliances and cabinets one touches while handling food.

Gas Stovetop

- **Grates** - Place in self-cleaning oven for self-clean cycle. NOTE: this may ruin the finish of the burners. Alternatively, clean the grates, then turn on burners under a *blech* (sheet of metal) for 10 minutes. One may use a clean *chametzdika* *blech*. SAFETY WARNING: it is best to turn on one burner at a time.
- **Burner** - Clean well.

- **Drip pans** - Replace, or clean. Some also cover after cleaning.
- **Rest of stovetop** - Clean well and cover with a double layer of foil.
- **Knobs** - Clean with ammonia or bleach. Can cover but not necessary.
- **Backsplash** - Clean with ammonia or bleach. Some cover.
- **DO NOT COVER VENT! This is important for all types of stovetops!**

Electric Stovetop

Clean burners well, turn on to a glow for 10 minutes. Cover surface with a double layer of foil.

- **Drip pans** - Replace, or clean. Some also cover after cleaning.

Glass / Ceramic Stovetop

Discuss with Rav, it's not simple! Do NOT cover the glass, it may crack.

- **Burners** - Clean and turn on till glowing under glass for 15 minutes. Place metal discs on the burner area.
- **Grates** - Place in self-cleaning oven. (The "blech method" for *kashering* the grates may break the glass.)
- If any food touches the glass on Pesach, it should be discarded.

Warming Drawers: Not *kasherable*.

Self-Cleaning Ovens

Many new ovens don't get to the 700° required for *kashering*. See instructions for standard ovens.

- **Interior and racks** - Self-clean.
- **Oven door & frame** - Clean well with EASY OFF™ before self-cleaning. Some cover inside of the door with foil.

Standard Ovens & Racks

Ovens with 'aqua-lift' technology or self-cleaning that do not reach at least 700° should be *kashered* like a standard oven.

- Don't use for 24 hours, then clean well with EASY-OFF™ (must be a caustic cleaner) especially around gasket area. If a stain remains after treating it once, spray and scrub it again, and then forget about it.
- For gas ovens, broil. For electric ovens, heat oven to 550° for at least an hour. Best to leave it for 2 hours. If the cleaning technology of your oven can clean every last tiny stain a cleaner does not need to be used, but one must be 100% sure there are no stains, and then they only need to burn the oven out.

Broiler: Sell pan. Clean well (EASY-OFF), then broil 45 minutes. If not using - clean. No need to *kasher*.

Oven Hood: It is best to cover the hood with foil. Must be totally clean (caustic cleaner) if not covered.

Outdoor Grill: It is not recommended to *kasher* grills for Pesach.

Microwave: It is not recommended to *kasher* microwaves for Pesach.

Metal Sinks

Clean very thoroughly. Pour Drano™ or ammonia down the drain. Do not use hot water for 24 hours. Use a 'kosher for Pesach' pot to pour boiling water on every single spot in the sink. One can use a *chametzdika* pot by boiling water in the pot and then dumping the water out and afterward using that pot to *kasher*.

- **Knobs** - It's best to cover plastic faucet knobs. Stainless steel knobs can be *kashered* with the sink.
- **Aerator** - It is best to replace.
- **Spout** - Turn water on hottest, pour boiling water on whole faucet. Or cover.
- **Drain strainer** - Replace.

Enamel Sinks: Cover surface with contact paper or foil. Place rack and basin in sink. Don't put anything directly into the sink.