

# CONGREGATION TORAH OHR

## OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR GOOD HEALTH: OURS & OTHERS

Congregation Torah Ohr is dedicated to the **SAFETY** of all our Members, Staff and Guests. The Torah prohibits us from causing harm to others. One who is ill from a cold or flu must take the proper steps to prevent spreading the illness to others.

The **COVID19** situation is serious and warrants an appropriate response. It is critical to respond proportionally, in line with expert advice, and avoid creating a situation of panic.

*The following are annotated excerpts of recommendations released by the OU based on the CDC protocols.*

**Coming to Shul or Staying Home** - If you are ill, or have early symptoms of a cold or flu, **do not** come to shul or any other gathering. For example, the flu can be fatal, chas v'shalom. It's difficult to think of not being in shul but our obligation is to protect the health of others, which supersedes the mitzvah of shul. This is true even for a mourner saying Kaddish. If you have a compromised immune system or any personal concerns for your well-being, please feel comfortable to daven at home.

**All members should be especially vigilant to follow these common-sense CDC protocols:**

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Replace the handshake with a fist bump or elbow bump, or a smile. No kissing or hugging.
- Cover your cough or sneeze, preferably with a tissue that is immediately disposed. Otherwise cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Keep a bottle of sanitizer available at your home's entrance and in your car for use when you can't immediately wash your hands. (See below regarding Shabbat).
- Disinfect objects and surfaces that are frequently handled. The Shul is doing this multiple times a day.

### Additional Considerations

**On Shabbat – The Use of Hand Soap and Hand Sanitizers** - The use of liquid soaps is permissible.

A liquid hand sanitizer or thin gel may be applied without any hesitation. If all you have is a thicker hand sanitizer, be careful to fully rub it into the skin until it is no longer noticeable.

**Sefer Torah, Mezuzah, Siddur and Chumash** – Even decades ago Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin discouraged kissing the Torah mantle directly with one's lips. In this time of concern, **do not kiss** the Torah even with one's hands or Tallis. Rather, point to the Torah and then gently kiss one's hand. The same applies to the Mezuzah, Siddur and Chumash. **Do not kiss** these holy items.

*These are constantly evolving guidelines. We will continue to monitor the Federal and local authorities along with other area shuls.*