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Statement on Celebrating Passover 5780/2020

How is this Passover different than all other Passovers? On all other Passovers there were no pandemics, but on this Passover, COVID-19 plagues the world.

Passover is a time when many gather with friends and family or join together in community seders. Barring a major downgrading of COVID-19 concerns by Public Health Toronto, it is clear that such gatherings should not happen this year.

The best public health advice at this moment is for everyone to stay home as much as possible. This is for your own health and the health of society at large. As such, **Passover Seders should only be celebrated with the members of one's immediate household.** To be clear, especially since those over the age of 65 are at increased risk of death from COVID-19, **seniors in our community should prioritize taking care of their health over family celebrations for the duration of this crisis,** even if that means not spending seder night together with the family. We understand that this will be a heartbreaking reality and a major disruption for many.

There are many wonderful ways to celebrate Passover, even as we limit human contact. Please speak with your local rabbi for guidance.

To paraphrase the Talmud: Better we should have one less-than-ideal Passover, so that we can celebrate many Passovers in the future. (Yoma 85b)

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