

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.