

VA'AD HARABANIM RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC

PO BOX 1233 Teaneck, NJ 07666 • (844) 895-RCBC • <https://www.rcbcvaad.org>



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April 1, 2020

ז' ניסן תש"פ

Dear Friends,

We are writing with an update regarding the current health crisis and the ways that we should be reacting to it and preparing for Pesach:

A. Most importantly: We must continue to avoid contact with anyone outside of our immediate family that we are living with, even on Pesach. The virus is still on the rise, so our effective distancing is critical to our health and the health of our entire society. Failure to comply puts our life, and the lives of others, in grave danger. Please see [this important letter](#) that was written by over 200 physicians from Bergen County to offer guidance about this critical issue.

B. Shopping and Delivery of Groceries: It is commendable that so many people have been vigilant about maintaining social distances and are attempting to order groceries for delivery. However, the demands on the local stores have been overwhelming and they cannot keep up with the requests for delivery. Therefore, we recommend that healthy individuals do their own shopping and follow the limitations that are set in order to reduce crowding in the stores. Hopefully this will enable the groceries to accommodate delivery orders for people who are ill, elderly, quarantined or are otherwise unable to shop. In addition, when we all shop, let's offer to pick up groceries for neighbors who may have a harder time getting out or are attempting to minimize trips.

C. Mikvah: The mikvaot are continuing to operate to the greatest extent possible while maintaining a high level of cleanliness and safety. Please follow the guidelines that are set by each mikvah (and are posted on their websites). Please understand that no one may compromise on any standard that is set by the mikvah, even with halachik and medical permission.

D. Help in the Homes: People who have cleaning or babysitting help in your homes should try to maintain their salaries since they rely on this income. Additionally, these employees should not be coming to our homes at this time, especially if they work in multiple houses throughout the week.

E. Research: There is ongoing research to find treatments for COVID-19. If you have recovered from the virus, you can reach out to Mount Sinai Hospital at COVIDSerumTesting@mountsinai.org or check the [Holy Name Medical Center website](#) where there will be updates about this.

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F. **Bikur Cholim:** Please help others who are ill in a safe way. Consider calling, ordering food from local establishments, etc., as people may feel particularly isolated, in addition to being sick. Bikur Cholim of Bergen County is sending hundreds of packed sandwiches and snacks to employees in our local hospitals. The health of our community is dependent on the frontline healthcare workers who are working tirelessly on our behalf and at a great risk to themselves. To participate in this effort, please donate at bikurcholimbergencounty.org

G. **Nichum Aveilim:** There are many mourners in our community who are experiencing this sad time in a most unusual way. Please consider calling mourners even more often than we may have visited because of the unique isolation that we are experiencing.

H. **Seder:** We urge everyone to focus on the positive aspects of the Pesach experience in order to challenge the difficult mood that we find ourselves in. Although none of the mitzvot of Pesach may be performed before nightfall of Pesach, we may consider Zoom gatherings of separated families on erev Pesach or on Chol haMoed, during which *divrei Torah* can be shared between children, grandparents and cousins. Similarly, consider writing thoughts and messages that can be “sealed” and read at the seder.

We would like to wish everyone a *chag kasher vesamech* - a happy and healthy holiday. May we truly experience a much needed redemption.

Sincerely,

The Rabbinical Council of Bergen County