

## **Guidelines for Mikvaot – Protection Against Covid-19.**

**7 April 2021**

These guidelines have been prepared for Mikvaot by the United Synagogue with the approval of the Chief Rabbi and the London Beth Din. The guidelines must be implemented by Mikvah attendants and those who have responsibility for the running of Mikvaot.

### **Guidelines for women who would like to visit the Mikvah.**

#### **Who can visit the Mikvah?**

- Women **cannot attend the Mikvah** whilst self-isolating, for any of the following reasons:
  - You have symptoms of coronavirus
  - You have tested positive for coronavirus in the past 10 days
  - Someone you live with has symptoms or has tested positive in the last 10 days
  - You've been told you've been in contact with someone who has tested positive in the last 10 days
  - Someone in your support bubble has symptoms or has tested positive, and you've been in contact with them in the past 48 hours.

#### **'Vulnerable' people**

Those who are 'clinically vulnerable' should continue to take account of the enhanced risk to them. They can attend the mikvah, provided 22 days have elapsed since their first Covid vaccination. They must arrange with the Mikvah attendant to have the first appointment of the night.

#### **'Extremely Vulnerable' people:**

Those who are classed as 'clinically extremely vulnerable' should not visit the mikvah. If someone who falls into this category has halachic questions in regards to their personal circumstances, they should be in touch with their Rabbi.

#### **Before attending the Mikvah:**

- You should contact the Mikvah in advance in order to book an appointment and to be sent a copy of their protocols if available.
- When booking an appointment, all women will need to answer screening questions by the attendant.
- Women should complete their preparations at home. You should arrive at the Mikvah ready to immerse, only needing to comb your hair. Towels will be provided by the mikvaot, unless you are told otherwise.

#### **When visiting the Mikvah:**

- To minimise contamination risk, you should leave all belongings and other unnecessary items at home or in their cars.
- One wishing to make a donation to the Mikvah should do so by BACS or online via one of the charity companies in advance of use. Contactless card payments will be accepted at those Mikvaot which have this facility. Cash or vouchers should not be accepted at the Mikvah.
- Upon entering the Mikvah you will be asked to thoroughly wash your hands with warm water and soap outside of the bathrooms for 20 seconds. You will need to do repeat this upon leaving the Mikvah. Alcohol based hand sanitisers should not be used.

- Women should not use the shower at the Mikvah, before or after immersion.
- You must ensure that you maintain a 2 metre distance between yourself and the Mikvah attendant **at all times**.

If you have any specific queries relating to your local mikvah please contact them directly for more information.

### **Guidelines for Mikvah attendants:**

Mikvah attendants and cleaning staff should be exceptionally stringent about social distancing both in their professional and personal capacity. For the protection of Mikvah attendants, cleaning staff and the public, communities will ensure that attendants and cleaning staff are not in a Covid-19 risk category.

### **Basic protocols for Mikvah attendants:**

- Proper hand-washing with soap and water should be performed for at least 20 seconds between users. Hand sanitiser is not to be used in place of soap and water.
- All attendants must be trained on proper hand-washing.
- The attendants should wear a face mask which is changed for each session. Attendants should avoid touching their face mask, and wash their hands using the protocol above when the mask is safely disposed.
- The preparation rooms, bathrooms, Cheder haTevila (immersion room), Mikvah steps (where the water does not reach) and other areas of the Mikvah must be fully cleaned and disinfected between users by the on-site cleaning staff.
- You must ensure that you maintain a 2 metre distance between yourself and the attendee **at all times**. If someone needs physical help climbing into the pool, you must wear a face mask, disposable gloves and a disposable apron.

### **These measures should be strictly enforced.**

Mikvaot must implement an appointment system, to ensure that there are the minimum number of women necessary inside the Mikvah building at any time. There should not be more than one woman in the waiting room.

Appointments should be spaced out to allow time for disinfection of surfaces in-between each use. A woman should not need to spend longer than 15 minutes in the Mikvah building.

All women should be screened by the attendant both when an appointment is made, and on arrival at the Mikvah.

Screening questions should ensure that women are not currently self-isolating for any of the reasons listed at the beginning of this document.

All preparation items should be removed from the Mikvah preparation rooms.

The Mikvah should be providing users with towels which have been washed at the correct temperature (minimum of 60 degrees) and single use slippers.

Mikvaot should consider placing a towel on the floor in front of the stairs to the Mikvah for each lady so that the water does not drip onto the floor.

The water's pH should be between 7-8. Chlorine concentration should be 1.5-3mg/litre and bromine, if used, should be 3-6mg/litre. Water should be changed regularly.