

HALACHOS OF USING COSMETICS AND PERSONAL CARE ITEMS ON PESACH

Rabbi Dovid Heber, STAR-K Kashrus Administrator

In addition to pharmaceutical companies, Rav Gershon Bess also contacts many cosmetic companies and bases the following chometz-free list on his research.

L'Halacha, all non-food items not fit for canine consumption (*nifsal mei'achilas kelev* i.e., something that one would not feed his dog) may be used on Pesach. This includes all cosmetics, soaps, ointments, and creams.¹ Nonetheless, people have acted stringently with regard to these items.

BELOW ARE SEVERAL REASONS WHY PEOPLE ARE STRICT:

1. **Many products**, including shaving lotion and perfume, contain denatured alcohol which can be restored to regular alcohol (see *Igros Moshe* O.C. 3:62). According to some opinions, one should not use such products, if chometz-based (*Sefer Kovetz Halachos Pesach* Chapter 12, footnote 7 has a brief discussion regarding the different opinions). The list notes products which do not use chometz-based alcohols.
2. **The Biur Halacha** (326:10 *B'shaar*) writes in the name of the Gra that one should be strict and not use non-kosher soap all year (*sicha k'shtiya*). Although we are not accustomed to this stringency, many individuals have adopted this *chumra* during Pesach and do not permit the use of chometz items even if they are used externally.
3. **Some are of the opinion** that we do not say "*nifsal*" (food is unfit for canine consumption) applies to a chometz item that has a good fragrance even if it is a non-food item, since the purpose of having a good fragrance is still being fulfilled. According to this, deodorants, etc. that contain a chometz derivative could not be used on Pesach, even if it is inedible. See *Maharam Shick, Orach Chaim* 242.
4. **Lipstick** is often inadvertently ingested when eating food. If it contains chometz, it is *halachically* permissible to apply to the lips since the lipstick is unfit for canine consumption. Nevertheless, most women prefer not to consume even a trace of anything prohibited. The Pesach list provides chometz-free lipsticks.
5. **Mouthwash and Toothpaste** contain sorbitol and other ingredients which may be derived from chometz. Although, *l'Halacha*, these items are permissible to use since they are *nifsal mei'achilas kelev*, many prefer not to use them since they are taken orally (*Sefer Kovetz Halachos Pesach* 12:11). The Pesach list provides chometz-free brands of such products.
6. **Historically**, it has been the custom to follow stringent opinions regarding *Hilchos Pesach*. In addition, it seems to have been a prevalent custom to restrict the use of items which may contain chometz, even when they are clearly *nifsal mei'achilas kelev*. The Pesach list provides accurate information for those who wish to continue to follow the more strict opinion and prevailing custom when using such products.

1. There are numerous *halachos* beyond the scope of this article regarding which personal care items and cosmetics may or may not be used on any Shabbos or Yom Tov. For a full discussion, see "The Kashrus, Shabbos, and Pesach Guide to Cosmetics" at star-k.org/passover or call STAR-K.