

# PESACH SHIURIM FOR MATZAH AND WINE - FOR HEALTHY INDIVIDUALS AND THOSE WITH DIABETES OR OTHER MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Halacha tells us how much wine and matzah one must eat at the Seder. Anyone whose healthcare providers recommend dietary modifications that affect eating matzah or wine should consult with a *rav* to find out how to follow those health recommendations within halachic guidelines.

## MATZAH

The guidelines for minimum shiurim for matzah shown below are based on the *psak* of Rav Moshe Heineman *shlit"á*. For hand matzah, these calculations are based on Pupa-Tzelem matzos, which are approximately 9 matzos/lb. Note that matzos baked by other matzah bakeries have different sizes and measurements, which will affect the amount required for a shiur as well as the carbohydrate content of that *shiur*.

Those in good health should eat the following for *Achilas Matza* and *Afikomen*:<sup>1</sup>

TYPE	MINIMUM SHIUR	DIMENSIONS	CARBS (g)
Hand matzah (round)	one half (1/2) of a matzah	43.3 sq. in. <sup>2</sup>	22
Machine matzah	one half (1/2) of a matzah	24.5 sq. in. <sup>3</sup>	11.5-16

In the case of a medical condition (e.g., diabetes) which could be negatively impacted by matzah consumption, one may fulfill the mitzvah of *Achilas Matzah*, *Koreich* and *Afikomen* with the following:<sup>4</sup>

1 For *Koreich*, see Rabbi Mordechai Frankel’s article, “Halachos of the Pesach Seder,” in the *Koreich* section on page 161.

2 This assumes the whole hand matzah (before it was broken) had a diameter of 10.5 in., which means the entire matzah has an area of 86.6 sq. in., hence, 1/2 of the matzah is 43.3 sq. in.

3 This assumes a full rectangular machine matzah is 7” x 7”, which means the entire matzah has an area of 49 sq. in. Hence, 1/2 of the matzah is 24.5 sq. in. (This means one could eat a piece of square matzah that is 5 in. on each side.)

4 This means for each mitzvah one eats the designated amount within a 4 minutes span. For example, in case of a medical condition one may eat 1/4 of a machine matzah within a four-minute span to fulfill the mitzvah of *achilas matzah*. The same amount within the same span of time should be done for *Koreich* (with a *kezayis* of *maror*) and then for *Afikomen*.

TYPE	MINIMUM SHIUR	DIMENSIONS	CARBS (g)
<b>Hand matzah (round)</b>	One-quarter (1/4) of a matzah	217 sq. in. <sup>5</sup>	11
<b>Machine matzah</b>	One-quarter (1/4) of a matzah	12.25 sq. in. <sup>6</sup>	6-8

NOTE: If someone is only able to eat a total of three-quarters of the above hand or machine matza at the Seder he should eat in the following manner: Eat one-quarter of a matzah for Motzei Matzah. Following that, eat a very small amount of matzah for *Koreich*. Then eat one-half of a matzah for the *Afikomen*.<sup>7</sup>

If you need to know the carbohydrate amount for machine matzos, use the carbohydrate data on the nutrition facts label for a more accurate value.

## The Arba Kosos (Four Cups)

### A. Wine

**Cup Requirements:** The cup you use for the Four Cups must hold at least a *revi'is* (3.8 oz. or 112 mL).

**Minimum *shiur* to drink for the Four Cups:** One must drink at least 1.9 oz. (56 mL) for each of the Four Cups.<sup>8</sup>

**Additional Requirements:**

- The basic requirement is to drink wine with at least 4% alcohol.
- When drinking each cup, complete the *shiur* within 30 seconds.

### B. Adjusting for Medical Concerns

If someone needs to minimize carbohydrate intake (for example, they have Type 2 diabetes), the best choice of wine is a dry red wine. These have 1g (or less) of carbohydrates per ounce of wine. At the regular *shiur*, if one drinks the minimum

5 This assumes the whole hand matzah (before it is broken) has a diameter of at least 10.5 inches, which means the entire matzah has an area of 86.6 sq. in. Hence, 1/4 of the matzah equals 21.7 sq. in. This is the minimum *shiur* for someone with a medical condition. If someone requires *shiurim* even smaller than this, or is unable to eat matzah, *Koreich* and *Afikomen*, he should consult his *rav*. For a discussion of such *shiurim*, see Rabbi Mordechai Frankel's article "Halachos of the Pesach Seder" at [star-k.org/passover](http://star-k.org/passover).

6 This assumes a full rectangular machine matzah is 7 in. x7 in., which means the entire matzah has an area of 49 sq. in., hence, 1/4 of the matzah equals 12.25 sq. in. (This also means that one could eat a piece of matzah that is square, each side with a length and width of 3.5 in.) This is the minimum *shiur* for someone with a medical condition.

7 In this case, before eating *Motzei Matzah* and the *Afikomen*, a person should have in mind that he is about to perform the mitzvah of eating matzah – see page 160 footnote 111.

8 This is the minimum *shiur*. Regarding how much of the cup one must drink *l'chatchila*, see Rabbi Frankel's article, "The Halachos of the Pesach Seder," in the *Four Cups* section beginning on page 154.

of 1.9 oz., they will only consume about 2 g of carbohydrates per cup. If one with type 2 diabetes is not able to drink alcohol, the best option is diluted grape juice.

People taking insulin or sulfonylureas (e.g., glimepiride, glipizide, or glyburide) for their diabetes must consult with their healthcare provider before drinking wine, as these medications are more likely to cause hypoglycemia when a person has consumed alcohol.

If one is taking medications that should not be taken with alcohol, they must avoid wine at the Seder and drink grape juice instead. Do not stop any medication in order to drink wine at the Seder without consulting your healthcare provider. Those with alcohol use disorder who are abstinent from alcohol must not drink wine at the Seder. In all cases, consult your *rav* for guidance.

C. Diluting Wine with Grape Juice and Water

Higher carbohydrate wine may be diluted in the maximum ratios listed below. These ratios allow the wine to retain enough of its properties to qualify it being used for the Four Cups:

WINE	GRAPE JUICE	WATER
1/3	2/3	-
1/3	1/3	1/3
1/3	-	2/3 (see NOTE below)

NOTE: The diluted wine must contain at least 4% alcohol.<sup>9</sup> If there is a health issue, it is advisable to start with wine that has at least 12% alcohol, then dilute it to 4% alcohol by adding up to 2 parts water to 1 part wine (i.e., a ratio of 2:1).<sup>10</sup> When diluting to have 1/3 wine in your cup, you will consume slightly more than 0.6 oz. wine per *kos*. This is about 2.6 oz. for all four cups. This is assuming you drink 1.9 oz. from a 3.8 oz. cup. When using dry red wine, this is less than 1g of carbohydrates per *kos*.

D. Grape Juice and Diluted Grape Juice

Although drinking wine is preferable for someone with no medical concerns, when it is necessary for medical reasons, a person should drink grape juice. The minimum *shiur* (1.9 oz. from a 3.8.oz. cup) of regular Kedem grape juice has about 9g of carbohydrates. If pure grape juice is not acceptable due to medical needs, diluted grape juice should be used. If using Light Grape Juice, it should not be further diluted. The minimum *shiur* (1.9 oz. from a 3.8 oz. cup) of Light Kedem Grape Juice has about 6g of carbohydrates.

9 This is to fulfill the obligation of wine. If one cannot drink wine, he can fulfill his obligation with grape juice. This is discussed further below, in Section D.

10 If the alcohol content is 9%, then dilute it with less than 55% water.

GRAPE JUICE	WATER
51% or more (i.e., more than half)	49% or less (i.e., less than a half)

Ideally, this mixture should be prepared before Yom Tov to allow for the most diluted concentration of grape juice that can be used for the Four Cups. In a dedicated container, prepare 16 oz. of grape juice and 15 oz. of water. This mixture will provide enough grape juice for the Four Cups for both Seder nights, assuming your Seder cups are the minimum 3.8 oz. size. Drinking the minimum *shiur* (1.9 oz.) of this mixture equals about 4.5g of carbohydrates.

E. Egg Matzah

Matzah made with more than just flour and water is known as “egg matzah.” Egg matzos can include eggs, fruit juice, honey, seasonings, among other ingredients. According to Ashkenazic practice, they may not be eaten on Pesach except by those who are sick or elderly. These include “Kosher for Passover” Egg Matzah Crackers and Egg Matzah Tams.

Although it is permissible for those who are ill or elderly to eat these products on Pesach, they may not be used to fulfill the obligation to eat matzah at the Seder. Medical conditions that may necessitate eating egg matza on Pesach are gastrointestinal conditions and eating disorders. Unless there are other complicating factors, people with diabetes would not benefit from choosing to eat egg matzah instead of regular matza. Consult with your *rav*.

F. Sugar Substitutes

Powdered Equal, Splenda, and NutraSweet sold year-round are NOT Kosher for Passover, and may not be used on Pesach. For a list of Kosher for Passover sugar substitutes available in stores, see page 22 in the *STAR-K Pesach Guide*.

*STAR-K thanks Mrs. Brendel Plonka, MS, RDN, CDCES, CNSC for her invaluable assistance with this article. Brendel provides medical nutrition therapy for adults and children in her private practice. She can be reached at [brendelplonkardn.com](mailto:brendelplonkardn.com).*