

PURITY CYCLE SUMMARY¹

The following is a *general* summary containing only the basic, *most common details*². *It is intended as an overview.*

Niddah State

Any bleeding emanating from the uterus, causes the wife to enter the *niddah* state. At this time, the following are forbidden:

- marital relations
- sleeping in the same bed
- hugging
- kissing
- any physical contact

Checking That Bleeding Has Ceased

Once at least five days³ have passed, and bleeding and/or staining have completely ceased, the wife:

- washes her entire body, including the private area
- prior to sunset she examines herself using a clean, soft, white cloth⁴
- a general procedure is to stand with one leg raised on an object, the cloth is wrapped around the fingers and inserted deeply to thoroughly check for remnants of bleeding

Extra Stringency

If the above checking is clean, many women perform an additional exam. Specifically:

- again, before sunset, a clean, soft, white cloth is inserted into the private area
- this is removed after starlight and checked for stains

Seven White Days

At this point, the wife begins wearing white underwear and sleeping on white bed sheets.

She has begun the Seven White Days, during which she:

- checks twice daily, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, with a clean, soft, white cloth

1. Supplied by Rabbi Fishel Jacobs, author of [Family Purity - A Guide to Marital Fulfillment](#).

This is a first draft to be updated. See, [FamilyPurity.com](#) for more information.

2. These are the most common activities which are forbidden at this time. Other limitations exist, and can be seen in comprehensive books on this subject.

3. Some Sefardic customs hold this to be a minimum of four days.

4. These are commercially packaged and sold worldwide.

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- if this amount of checking causes difficulty or complications, she should discuss this with an orthodox rabbi who may be able to advise on a lesser number of minimum checking

Preparation for Immersion

During the afternoon of the last day of the Seven White Days, the wife prepares for immersion.

On this day⁵ she does not eat meat, corn or any other food which typically gets stuck between the teeth.

Reason For Preparation

For immersion in the *mikvah* to be valid:

- the wife's entire body (and hair) must be simultaneously submerged
- and there can be no substances intervening between her body and the *mikvah* water.

Checklist to ensure there are no intervening substances on her body.

Remove All Objects

- Remove all clothing, jewelry, bandages, contact lenses etc.
- Even if any of these are loose.
- If any of these can not be removed, an orthodox rabbi (or the *mikvah*-lady) should be consulted.

Fingernails

- Fingernails should be clipped short (this does not require pain(!)) and cleaned.

Makeup

- Makeup should be removed.
- An orthodox rabbi (or *mikvah*-lady) should be consulted regarding questions surrounding hair dyes, manicured nails or permanent makeup which can't be removed.

Washing Body & Hair

- The entire body is washed with warm water and soap, preferably using a bathtub, as this is the accepted custom.
- If a bathtub is not available, she may suffice with showering.
- If there is limited warm water, the body may be washed with cold water, while utilizing the warm water for the hair.

5. When immersion falls on Saturday night, or a *Yom Tov* night, or following a day during which there was a mitzvah for her to eat meat (e.g. a circumcision) she may, indeed, eat meat and exercise extra caution while cleaning.

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- The hair on the head is washed with shampoo to be clean and brushed to free any knots. Similarly, hair on other parts of the body are washed and fluffed with the fingers to free from knots.
- A wife who is accustomed to cutting or shaving hair from her body should do so prior to immersing earlier that day and be careful to wash away any remnants.

Teeth

- Though the mouth need not be opened during immersion, the teeth are brushed and/or flossed.
- Permanent fillings and crowns do not negatively affect immersion. Questions regarding dental work (e.g. temporary crowns, stitches, fillings etc.) may be asked of an orthodox rabbi (or *mikvah*-lady)

While doing all the above the wife visually inspects her body for intervening substances. Places which can not be seen, she checks using her hand.

Immersion

On this last day of the Seven White Days, after nightfall, she immerses in a *mikvah*.

- The *mikvah* must be under rabbinic supervision
- If she did the preparations for immersion at her home, at the *mikvah* she brushes or combs her hair, and rinses her entire body - again.

Example of the Above Purity Cycle

One⁶ typical example of the above purity cycle may be:

- Menstruation began on Sunday.
- Bleeding and staining ceased by Thursday.
- On Thursday, the wife washes her entire body, including the private area.
- Close to and prior to sunset she performs an internal exam using a clean, white, soft cloth.
- If that is clean, before sunset, she inserts another cloth and removes it after starlight.
- Friday, therefore, is the first her Seven White Days.
- Her immersion will be the following Thursday after nightfall.

Time of Preparation

Preferably, preparation should begin before sunset on the last of the Seven White Days and continue after nightfall:

- If circumstances (e.g. work responsibilities, lack of a baby sitter) prevent preparations beginning during the daytime, she may do the entire process during the nighttime.
- In this case, it should last at least an hour. This is to safeguard and ensure it is not done hastily.

6. Though this is very common, numerous purity cycles may occur. One example is an extended (i.e. longer than five days) niddah state due to menstruation or following birth.

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Friday Night

- Many of the elements of preparation (e.g. cutting fingernails) may not be done on *Shabbos*.
- Therefore, when immersion is to be on Friday night, she should make sure to finish all the preparations before sunset.

Saturday Night

When immersion falls on Saturday night:

- She performs a complete preparation on Friday.
- During *Shabbos* she is cautious not to come into contact with sticky substances, or anything which could intervene between her body and the water. And, that no hairs become knotted.
- She is permitted to eat meat on *Shabbos*.
- On Saturday night, after *Shabbos*, she briefly repeats the preparation process.

Location of Preparation

According to personal preference, preparation is done either at home or at the *mikvah* itself. Most *mikvahs* today are modern, exquisite, clean and comfortable.

Materials

In most major cities *mikvahs* supply *all* the necessary materials. (Some may require purchasing.) In smaller cities, the wife should check to see if she needs to bring any of her own supplies. In any event, the wife may choose to bring her own personal hygienic items.

Checklist (for convenience). Again, *some or all these* may be available at the *mikvah*.

- Washcloth, brush, sponge, soap
- Makeup remover, cold cream, polish remover etc.
- Shampoo, conditioner (to remove knots.) Note: shampoo and conditioner need to be washed out not to leave film. Brush, comb.
- Razor, cream or lotion (depilatory) if she wishes to remove hair.
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, floss.
- Nail clipper, scissors, file, emery board, toothpick.
- Contact lenses case, saline and cleaning solutions.
- Q-tip to clean ears, belly button, nose.
- Towel.
- Money for entrance to the *mikvah* or to purchase other items in list. Or, as a voluntary donation, if applicable.
- Robe, slippers, colored underwear (for following immersion), makeup

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At the Mikvah

If she prepared at home, she rinses her body, brushes her hair for knots and checks visually and manually, again.

If need exists, she may ask the mikvah-lady for instructions