



Guidelines for Yom Kippur / Fasting for transplant recipients and kidney donors

General Introduction

1. The obligation to fast on Yom Kippur applies to every Jew, except those whose lives would be endangered if they fast.
2. There are those for whom fasting may be dangerous and their obligation on Yom Kippur is different from that of healthy people. Everyone requires personal instructions for their own situation.
3. Just as a healthy person is obliged to fast on Yom Kippur, a person for whom the fast may be dangerous is obliged to refrain from fasting. Failing to do so is not holding oneself to a stricter standard but is a transgression of endangering one's health.
4. What follows is a set of guidelines for kidney patients, transplant recipients, and kidney donors in the first period after their donation. It should be emphasized that all of the following is only for people who do not have an additional health problem, such as diabetes or heart problems. For those who have additional health concerns, a separate consultation with a doctor and a rabbinical authority is necessary.
5. In the case of a life-threatening situation, fasting is not permitted without explicit medical authorization.
6. Drinking in "Shiurim", that is, in small portions, is intended only for those who according to a rabbi or a qualified doctor, must drink small quantities on Yom Kippur. Only those who receive specific instructions from a rabbi or a doctor are permitted to drink in these small portions.

Transplant recipients

A kidney recipient needs to drink, but does not usually need to eat except as specified below.

Accordingly, every transplant recipient is required to drink about 1.5 liters of liquid on Yom Kippur during the fast, and one additional liter after the fast is finished = 2.5 liters total.

You may drink nutritious drinks, such as milk, grape juice, apple juice or fruit nectar, and not only water.

It is crucial to take your anti-rejection medication every day!

Along with taking the medication, the transplant is allowed to eat something light, such as a biscuit or a cracker.

Method of drinking: if possible, it is preferable to drink in small portions of up to 40 cc (some opinions hold up to 35 cc) every 9 minutes. However, anyone who is not sure that he will be able to drink the required amount (about 37 small portions every 9 minutes for 7 hours) should drink as usual and not risk his health.

Kidney donors

Veteran donors

Those who donated a kidney more than a year ago can fast as usual, from the beginning of the fast to the end, but needs to be careful not to dehydrate. Stay out of the sun, do not do strenuous exercise, and try to stay in the air conditioning.

New donors

Anyone who donated less than a year ago, should drink in “shiurim” as described above.

Please note that in the opinion of doctors outside of Israel with whom we consulted, those who donated more than three months before Yom Kippur can fast normally. However, Israeli experts believe that the climate in this country requires more caution, and recommend waiting a full year before fasting without drinking.

A donor looking for a stricter approach can “damage” his drink so that it is unappetizing and drink small portions from the damaged drink, additional details below.

Dialysis patients

Dialysis patients, who have no additional health concerns, need to drink only a small amount of liquid. There are two types of patients:

a. Those who still produce urine, and b. those who are producing little if any urine.

Those who produce urine should drink a little in small portions (shiurim), and they should drink sugary drinks to prevent potassium from rising. They also must eat 3 times during the day, each time 4 little bits of food less than 30 grams, 9 minutes apart (a few cookies or crackers 9 minutes apart, for instance).

Dialysis patients who no longer produce urine should not drink, but should eat 3 times a day, each time 4 times less than 30 grams as described above.

Pre-dialysis patients

These patients do not need to eat but do need to drink a lot. They should drink about 2 liters in small “shiurim”. Patients should consult with their nephrologist regarding the precise amount they need to drink.

Blessings before and after eating and drinking

Those who regular drinks in “shiurim” make a blessing before the first drink only (unless they move from one place to another). There is no blessing after eating or drinking in small

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Please note

In order to drink 1.5 liters of liquid in shiurim of 35 cc you need to drink every 9 minutes for about 7 hours and so you should start drinking early in the morning.

If it is not possible to drink in the synagogue, it is preferable to stay at home – the fast is more important than public prayer.

Damaged drinks

As noted, anyone who needs to drink in shiurim can drink regular water but those who want a stricter approach, or someone who must swallow a pill with water can “damage” a drink to make it unpalatable. This can be done by taking several chamomile tea bags (uncaffeinated only) and brewing them in boiling water. Try it before Yom Kippur to make sure you can manage with it...at any rate the brewing must of course be done before the holiday begins. Summary

In Summary

Transplant recipients must drink on Yom Kippur all their lives.

Kidney donors in their first year – must drink 1.5 liters of water. After the first year they can fast as usual.

Specific questions can be directed to Rabbi Ostroff at 052-7611745

The original guidelines were written by Rabbi Heber on Erev Yom Kippur 2019.