

Home cooking

Congregation B'nai Tikvah Beth Israel supports *kashrut* as a basic tenet of Judaism. Furthermore, CBTBI is a *k'hillah k'doshah*, a sacred community, and so must have one clear consistent practice. We trust that all of our members and friends, are willing to observe these policies, no matter what their personal level of observance may be, so that any member of the Jewish community can feel comfortable eating in our building.

We are allowing home cooking in non-kosher homes to be brought into the premises due to the limited number of supervised caterers in our vicinity. Our kitchen, and what we serve at CBTBI, represents the Jewish traditions around food. This means that great care must be taken in order not to compromise the *kashrut* of the kitchen. **It is essential that members bringing food into the premises honor the trust implicit in our policies** and take the care to read ingredient labels carefully and honor our policies. We urge you to follow these guidelines scrupulously. We trust that our members care about CBTBI's reputation for proper *kashrut* and will indeed observe these rules faithfully.

In order to have potluck meals at the synagogue, we ask our members to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Food brought in for a potluck must be kosher (**dairy or vegetarian only**). It may not be brought into the CBTBI kitchen, nor may any utensil from the kitchen be used with it.
- Home-prepared food must be made in disposable aluminum pans and it must be brought in still in that pan, and cut in auxiliary kitchen space (separated from the main kitchen) set up for that purpose. All mixes or ingredients must carry *ahashgahah* (kosher certification). This will be explained below.

- Home-prepared food must be brought in on paper plates and served only on the special separate cake trays used only for that purpose. No utensils, other than disposables, may be brought from home.
- Fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs, salt, sugar, spices, tea, coffee, soft drinks, and milk do not require *kashrut* certification. Fruits and vegetables should be inspected for bugs and eggs should be checked for blood spots. Cut raw fruits & vegetables, or salads can be prepared at home.
- Because processed foods must both contain kosher ingredients and be prepared in a kosher way, all prepared or packaged food (including canned, frozen, baked, or foods otherwise changed from their natural state) as well as dairy products (yogurts, etc.) must bear kashrut certification from a recognized authority, such as the O-U or O-K. A list of symbols used by such authorities is attached to this policy. There are hundreds of supervising agencies. If there is doubt as to a particular symbol or kashrut authority, the rabbis will give final approval.
- The “K” symbol is not trademarked and is not a symbol for a specific certification authority. Therefore, it is not sufficient to certify that the ingredients and manner of preparation are kosher. The Tablet K heksher is also not recognized by the Conservative movement as reliable and may not be used.
- When wine is served, it is our policy always to have grape juice available for those who can’t drink alcohol.
- Although it is impossible to keep track of all possible food allergies, it is an increasingly common courtesy to label foods containing nuts, since some people with that allergy have severe, life-threatening reactions.

DEFINITION OF A KOSHER HOME

Different households will practice kashrut as they determine. For purposes of communal Kashrut, the following practices constitute having a Kosher home.

Exclusively kosher foods are brought into the home:

All **meat** and **poultry** is purchased from a kosher butcher or is prepackaged and has Rabbinic certification.

Only kosher **fish** – that is, those with fins and scales – are used. Shell fish and eels are not used. A list of kosher and non-kosher species can be found on the internet www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/. Conservative practice permits the eating of swordfish and sturgeon, although many people do not follow this ruling. (Some Orthodox authorities also eat swordfish.)

All **packaged, canned, or frozen products** are certified kosher, or are checked to be sure they contain no non-kosher ingredients. (As noted above, it is preferable not to rely on a kosher-by-ingredient approach, but such a home may still be regarded as kosher.)

Commercially cooked food must come from establishments that are under Rabbinic supervision.

Commercially baked goods must come from establishments described.

All wines and national commercially produced cheeses are permitted.

Eggs are checked for blood spots and spotted eggs are discarded. (Checking is especially necessary for “free-range” and organic eggs. For regular “factory eggs” this practice is not necessary, but a blessing alights on the scrupulous). In all events, if blood is found, the eggs must be discarded.)

Meat and dairy dishes are completely separated in the kitchen:

Separate dishes, pots, pans, utensils and flatware are used for meat and dairy foods. Utensils that become non-kosher are properly koshered. (Kashering processes should be discussed with Rabbi Gendra.)

These dishes, pots, utensils, etc. are washed separately. Separate sponges, cloths, towels are used. Meat and dairy dishes are not washed together in the dishwasher.

Products (including those labeled "non-dairy") are checked for milk derivatives, such as casein, sodium caseinate and lactose, if they are to be used with meat.