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**BEFORE THE BRIT**

Inform your pediatrician that you are planning a Brit (ritual circumcision) on the eighth day and inquire as to whether or not there exist any extenuating circumstances of which the Mohel should be made aware. For purposes of pain management, please note that some pediatricians prescribe a 5 mg. tube of emla cream. ( There are also other lidocaine based creams ) . This lidocaine-based topical anesthetic is placed on the penis 90 minutes before the service. If possible, refrain from feeding the baby thirty minutes before the brit.

**FOR THE BRIT**

Please provide the following items:

1. Kiddush cup (any cup will do although one that has been in the family, or that may be used for his future Bar Mitzvah or wedding would enhance the ceremony).
2. A warm, receiving blanket for after the Brit.
3. A well-lit area with a table and chair.
4. A bottle of sweet, Kosher red wine.
5. A wastebasket with liner.
6. One tube of polysporin ointment.
7. Two boxes of 3"x3" sterile gauze pads.
8. Two cloth diapers.
9. Two disposable diapers and wipes.
10. Two Tallitot and two Kippot.

## **AFTER THE BRIT**

A Vaseline-soaked gauze is wrapped around the circumference of your son's penis. The gauze will either fall off within 24-48 hours or you may remove it. To remove it find the end and slowly unravel. A Polysporin gauze treatment with each diaper change (see below) will make this process easier.

Once the gauze I administered either falls off or you take it off, continue to cover the glans of the penis (which we know as the head) at each diaper change with a 3x3 inch gauze pad which has been liberally coated on one side with Polysporin ointment. It need not be wrapped or taped, just place it down and close the diaper.

The skin on the circumference of his penis and glans may be red for several days after the Brit. Small amounts of blood may be found on the gauze or diaper. These changes are a natural part of the healing process and are not cause for alarm; however, if at anytime you are concerned and feel that your child needs attention, call me. If I am not available, seek other professionals' attention (pediatrician, etc.).

## **SEUDAT MITZVAH**

It is traditional to provide a Seudat Mitzvah (a kosher feast) in honor of the child and his parents. Due to the sacred nature of this ceremony, and to insure that all your guests are comfortable, *meat and milk should not be mixed. If you are not kosher generally, it may be easier to prepare or order in a dairy meal. Please consult me or your clergy for help in preparing this meal.*

It is not required that a minyan be present for the ceremony. The father and Sandek are encouraged to wear their Tallit; others may if they desire. All men should have their heads covered during the Brit and Seudat Mitzvah (feast).

I encourage you to invite your clergy to attend the Brit and co-officiate with me. It enriches the service when your Rabbi and/or Cantor are present to preside over the naming of the baby.

It is customary, but not required, that a mitzvah be performed at the earliest possible moment. Many britot are conducted early in the morning, sometimes as part of a Shacharit Service; however, the ceremony may take place any time up to sunset. Please note that the actual scheduling of the time of the Brit is a complicated equation that can involve issues such as the baby's weight, color and type of delivery. Please consult me after the birth, so that we can determine the appropriate scheduling of your Simcha.

You may videotape and photograph at nearly all times during the Brit. Considering that your baby will grow up and look at these pictures/videos, it may be in poor taste to record the actual procedure.

## **HONORS AND NAMING**

Traditionally an infant is ushered to the room of the circumcision by the kvatterin and kvatter. Sometimes, the kvatter and kvatterin are a couple trying to have a baby of their own. Otherwise, they can be any persons related or unrelated whom you wish to honor.

The Sandek is given the highest honor; that of holding the baby firm and giving him wine, while the circumcision takes place. Keep this in mind when you make your choice. While oftentimes grandfathers get this honor, there is also a tradition that this honor be given to a well-known sage or learned person.

Choosing a Hebrew name for your child can be very exciting. Numerous books of names have been published with the meanings and origins of hundreds of names. I can assist you in this process.

Once you've chosen a name, you might like to prepare a few words to say yourselves once the Brit is over. In addition to welcoming your guests and thanking them for attending, you can add meaning to the event by speaking personally about the persons of blessed memory for whom your son is named. Some parents even choose to do this in the form of a "letter to the baby" which can then become part of the infant's scrapbook.

There are numerous ways to involve more people in your celebration as you wish (see list on following page). Please call me should you have any questions and inform me as to whom you have selected for honors.

## **HONOR**

## **FUNCTION**

### **KVATTERIN & KVATTER**

Together the Godmother and Godfather carry the baby into the room as the guest of honor and the newest member of our religious community.

### **KISEH SHEL ELIJAHU** (Throne of Elijah)

Places the baby on the chair designated as Throne of Elijah. Some place great emphasis on this honor.

### **MIYAD HAKISEH** (From the Throne)

Takes baby from the Throne of Elijah and gives him to the father who places him on Sandek's lap.

### **SANDEK**

Holds baby during Brit.  
Highest honor at the Brit.  
Many single out the Rabbi or Grandfather for this honor.

### **STANDING SANDEK**

Holds baby while blessings are recited.  
Assists Sandek as needed.

### **KRIAT HASHEM**

Recites prayer during which the baby is given his Hebrew name. This is an important honor often given to the Cantor or Rabbi.

### **BERACHOT**

Concluding blessings include the benediction over the wine and bread.

## POST CARE INSTRUCTIONS

I will wrap two bandages around the penis at the time of the Brit. One bandage, a cotton-like material to stop any bleeding, and another one to keep the area clean. Generally, both bandages will fall off together. If they have not fallen off within 24-36 hours, please remove the outer bandage by carefully unwinding it. The outer bandage is made of gauze, which is saturated with Vaseline. So don't worry about pulling a scab. The second bandage may or may not come off with it. If not, soak a cotton ball with lukewarm tap water and squeeze it on the bandage, saturating it. You should be able to remove it by slowly pulling it off the incision. The second bandage is made of a material that will cause the blood to coagulate. As the baby urinates some of the coagulated blood will dissolve, and you might see a pink or red stain on the diaper or gauze pad. Don't worry!

After the bandages come off you will see several things:

Firstly, the penis will be very red. It is neither sore nor sensitive. It is red because until now it has not come into contact with light or air. This redness will disappear within a few weeks. You will also see a red swelling behind the glans. This is normal. The swelling will go down within a few weeks. You might also see a mucous discharge. This is lymphatic secretion which is akin to the beginning of a soft scab. It might vary in color from white, green, yellow, or gray. It will cover the head of the penis and very much resemble skin. In some cases the build up of this secretion on the shaft of the penis below the head might tend to look like a blister. It is not a blister! Do not attempt to remove this from the shaft of the penis. Since this secretion functions a soft scab, removing it might cause bleeding. Just leave it alone and it will eventually go away. To the untrained eye this secretion might look like pus. IT IS NOT PUS! It too will go away. The length of time will depend on the amount of secretion. All of these may be expected in varying degrees.

CARE: Until the bandages come off, place a Vaseline coated sterile gauze pad over the penis with every diaper change. After the bandages come off, begin to apply the antibiotic ointment directly to the incision gently with a fingertip and continue placing the Vaseline coated gauze pad over the penis forming a barrier between the penis and diaper. The antibiotic and the coated gauze pad may be discontinued after one week, or as soon as bathing begins. (You may begin bathing on the fourth day following the Brit, providing the umbilical chord has fallen off, and the area is dry). If you should happen to catch the baby urinating, and the flow is not strong (assuming this is not the end of the flow) please call me at once. If the baby is unusually fussy, (i.e., you cannot quiet him by feeding, burping, holding or changing) please call me.

I am on call 24 hours a day. If you think you see something that worries you, please do not hesitate to call me.

Enjoy!

Mazel Tov!

TRAINED AND CERTIFIED AT BIKUR CHOLIM HOSPITAL, JERUSALEM