

# **Kashrut Policy**

## **Congregation Knesseth Israel, Bound Brook, NJ**

*Judaism is a theology of the common deed. The purpose seems to be to ennoble the common.*

*--- Abraham Joshua Heschel*

### **Introduction**

Kashrut (the body of Jewish dietary laws and customs [Kosher]) is among the most universally recognized Jewish ritual practices. Observance of the dietary laws ties adherents to the Torah and to Jews in other times and places through the most common of human acts: eating.

Within Congregation Knesseth Israel (CKI), the ways in which individuals observe Jewish dietary traditions vary. Some members observe all the laws of kashrut in all settings, while others observe traditional kashrut to various degrees. Other members eat without regard to the traditional Judaic dietary laws.

Our communal dietary practices reflect a compromise that allows most of our members to participate in community events. The purpose of these guidelines is to document and clarify the specific kashrut practices that we, as a community, have adopted over time.

In the spirit of our community, we seek to retain as much of our tradition as possible even as we modify the practice of certain rituals and adjust our understanding of their meaning. By documenting our practices and the intentions behind them, we hope to ennoble our own community's traditions regarding this most common of all deeds.

## Definitions

**Kashrut:** The dietary laws of Judaism, defining what food is and is not "kosher," are cited in the Torah in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, and expanded in the Talmud and the codes of Jewish law. The Hebrew word "kasher" literally means "fit" or "acceptable."

- **Biblical Kashrut:** Delineates permitted and prohibited animals. Forbids “seething a kid in its mother’s milk.”
- **Rabbinic Kashrut:** Extends biblical mandates to include method of slaughter (shechita), permitted edible parts of each animal, rules on separation of meat and milk, etc.

**Treif:** All non-kosher foods, including pork products, shellfish (shrimp, crab, lobster, etc.) and non-kosher fish (fish without fins and scales, such as shark), non-kosher meats or poultry, ingredients made from non-kosher meat or poultry, and foods that contain both dairy and meat.

**Dairy:** (also called "milchig" in Yiddish, "halav" in Hebrew): Foods that consist in whole or in part of milk or products derived from milk (e.g., butter and cheese). These are often labeled with a “D” or “Dairy” following the Kashrut certification symbol.

**Meat:** (also called "fleishig" in Yiddish, "basar" in Hebrew): Foods that consist in whole or in part of ingredients derived from the flesh of animals. To be kosher, meat must come from an animal that has split hooves and chews its cud, or domesticated fowl (such as chicken or turkey). Preparation must be according to the requirements of kashrut under rabbinic supervision. These are sometimes labeled “Meat” following the Kashrut certification symbol.

**Fish:** Only fish that have both fins and scales is considered kosher. Shellfish is treif. Kosher fish is considered pareve (see below).

**Pareve/Parve:** Foods that in their natural state are neither meat nor dairy. Examples are fruits and vegetables, fish, eggs, pasta, grains, nuts and coffee. Pareve foods can be served with either dairy or meat. These are often labeled “Pareve” or “Parve” following the Kashrut certification symbol.

**Kosher Certification:** (also called "Hashgacha", "Heksher"): Food products approved as kosher under rabbinic supervision. Some of the more common symbols:



There is no current standard as to the placement of these symbols on packages. Most often, they can be found on the front label or near the ingredient list.

# Policy

**No food may be brought into the building – even for personal consumption – that does not follow the CKI Kashrut policy.** Additionally, all *CKI sponsored community events*, whether on CKI property or off-site, must follow the rules of kashrut as set forth in this policy. Dinners or events held at non-kosher restaurants or facilities (bowling, baseball, etc.) shall follow the special restaurant guideline below (*page 7*).

- No foods that contain treif ingredients (see definition above) may be consumed at any event, regardless of whether the food is prepared on-site or off-site. Additionally, no food products that contain treif ingredients may be used for any purpose at CKI (school arts and crafts projects, for example).
- Any meat/poultry served must be certified kosher. Furthermore, any food containing meat ingredients (e.g. broth) must be made with certified kosher meat or poultry.
- No dish may be served that contains both dairy products and meat ingredients. Furthermore, dairy foods may not be served at the same event where meat or poultry is served, and vice versa.
- Dairy foods which are factory-packaged and sealed (*not cut or made in the store*) such as cheese, butter, milk, etc. do not require kosher certification. Smoked cheeses must have a heksher.
- All whole fresh fruits and raw vegetables are kosher and do not require kosher certification.
- All packaged baked goods must have kosher certification.

**NOTE:** The rules set forth above for CKI communal events do not apply to private life cycle events, such as a shiva minyan, wedding, or brit milah, held in CKI members' homes or sponsored by members at other facilities, even if an open invitation to attend has been extended to the entire community. If there is doubt as to what food to bring to such an event, though, it is always best to use the CKI Kashrut Policy as a common denominator.

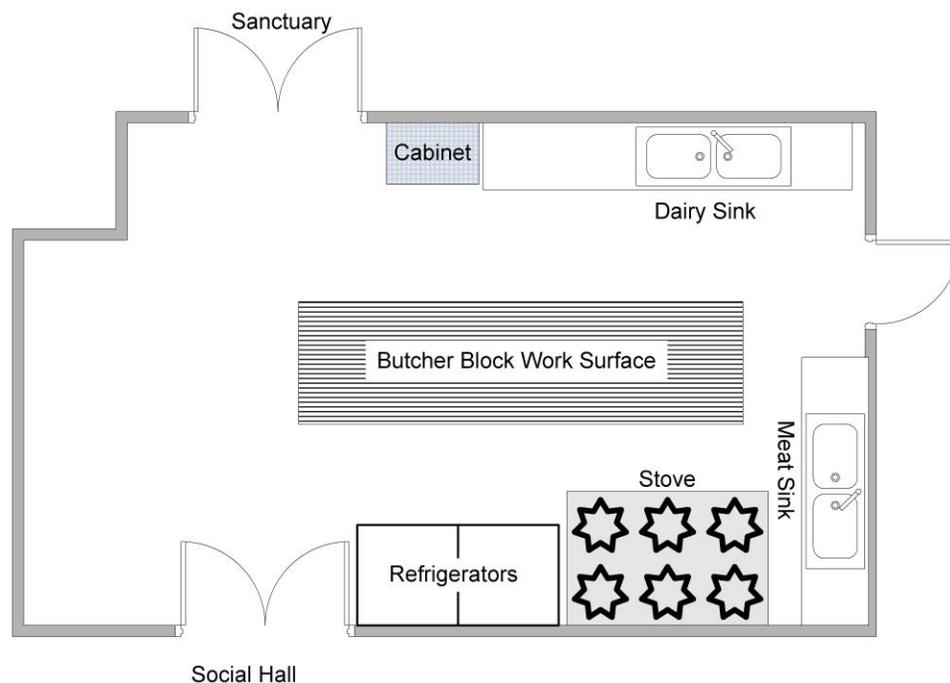
## Oneg, Kiddush, etc.

When a meat meal is served by CKI as part of a Shabbat Dinner or similar event, the food served at the Oneg Shabbat or Kiddush following services must be pareve. On all other occasions, the food served at the Oneg Shabbat or Kiddush following services may be either pareve or dairy.

## Wine and grape juice.

Wines and grape juices (e.g. Kiddush) must have a heksher. A non-alcoholic product should always be available as an option.

## Use of Kitchen.



- Approval from the Executive Board must be obtained before using the kitchen.
- Meals may be either "dairy" or "meat" and must be consistent for the entire meal, including desert; pareve foods may be served with either type of meal.
- Ovens shall be used for only one kind (either meat or dairy) of food at a time. Ovens and stove-tops must be thoroughly cleaned, removing any visible food or crumbs, and wiping up any spills before switching meal types.
- Preparation areas:
  - ★ The butcher block work surface should not be used uncovered as a cutting board or preparation surface. A meat or dairy cutting board or plate must always be used.
  - ★ Stainless steel and other similar preparation surfaces are to be cleaned between uses by wiping down with appropriate cleaners.
- Meat meals are to be prepared and cleaned using the meat sinks. Dairy meals are to be prepared and cleaned using the dairy sinks. Only one sink may be used for each event, even if items being prepared are pareve.
- Meat meals are to be prepared and served using utensils labeled for meat use. Dairy meals are to be prepared and served using utensils labeled for dairy use. Meat utensils are stored near the meat sink and dairy utensils are stored near the dairy sink.

The cabinet to the right of the doors entering the sanctuary contains drawers that store additional utensils labeled for meat or dairy items. After cleaning, utensils should be returned to the storage area from which it came.

## Catering

- All caterers must be provided with a copy of this Policy in advance of the event and must agree to adhere to it. All caterers serving meat at CKI must be Kosher certified and interviewed by the congregation's designated representative to make sure that they understand these guidelines and are willing to abide by them. As caterers are interviewed and approved, CKI will maintain a list of such approved caterers for event sponsors to consult.

For dairy events only, a caterer without rabbinic certification may be used after undergoing the above approval process.

- Subject to separate guidelines governing the private use of CKI facilities, a sponsor of a private event may have the CKI kitchen kashered to their own specifications. The kashering of the kitchen will be at the sole expense of the event sponsor. Similarly, the sponsor or the sponsor's caterer will be responsible for making the arrangements for kashering the kitchen, and all such arrangements must be approved in advance by the Rabbi (or the Rabbi's designee) and a CKI Board Officer.

## Bagels and other food from outside sources

CKI allows members to purchase bagels, cut fruit and vegetables from non-kosher sources. These items should be labeled with the source (name of store) and (if available) ingredients. When purchasing bagels from non-kosher bakeries, do not buy cream cheeses prepared in the store or bakery (e.g. lox spread). Rather, purchase only prepackaged cream cheeses with a heksher.

## Men's Club Summer Picnic

The picnic follows the general CKI kashrut policy with the following clarifications:

- ★ The Men's Club Picnic is a *meat* meal.
- ★ Any items brought, including desserts, must be pareve and come from a certified baker, have an appropriate Kosher Certification symbol.
- ★ All purchased items (such as baked goods) are to be from a certified source or labeled with an appropriate Kosher Certification symbol and should be brought in the original package.
  - All non-meat items (rolls, condiments, etc.) should be pareve. Most major brands of ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise are pareve, even though they are not so labeled.
  - "Vegetarian" items such as vege-burgers must also be labeled pareve.
- ★ The Men's Club provides a large variety of food for the entire community and no outside contributions are needed.

# Pot Luck Dinners

The Board will designate some specific calendared events to be categorized as “Pot Luck” meals. This policy only applies to those specified events.\*

Pot Luck Dinners follow the general CKI kashrut policy with the following clarifications:

- ★ Pot Luck Dinners are *dairy or vegetarian* meals.
- ★ All food items must be pre-cleared by the event coordinator.
- ★ The rules for **Home Cooking** listed below must be followed.
- ★ There is a two-table system. One table is reserved for dairy / vegetarian items that have a recognized kosher symbol and remain sealed.  
The other table is for dairy / vegetarian food prepared according to the rules of **Home Cooking** listed below.

**We do not use the synagogue kitchen for Pot Luck Dinners. No items may be brought into the kitchen for any purpose.** All food must be completely consumed, taken home or discarded following the dinner, and no home-prepared food will be stored in the synagogue.

## Home Cooking Policy (applies only to events specified as “Pot Luck”):

When preparing foods at home for specified CKI “Pot Luck” events, containers, appliances and utensils that are not kashered (ritually cleaned) may be used to prepare food in your home. We urge congregants to be sensitive to the variety of levels of kashrut observance within the CKI community. In all cases, members preparing food at home will comply with the following:

- Food prepared at home or purchased in a store or bakery **MUST** be checked to make certain that it contains no treif ingredients.
- Food must be brought to the synagogue in disposable containers (e.g., plastic, paper, disposable aluminum baking pans, etc.).
- A recipe or list of ingredients (or label from packaged item) along with the name of the preparer must accompany the dish and be displayed with it. This will also help people with food allergies avoid nuts, glutes, etc.
- The following additional policies apply to all food at “Pot Luck” events:
  - ★ Food will be served on paper/plastic disposable dinnerware.
  - ★ Tables will be covered with disposable tablecloths.
  - ★ Home prepared food will be placed on the table(s) designated for un-hekshered food.
  - ★ Nothing will be cleaned or prepared in the CKI kitchen.
  - ★ Containers and food may be disposed of in the outdoor CKI trash.

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\* Events such as the *Yom Kippur Break-Fast*, *Chanukah Dinner* and *Shabbat Across America* will continue to be Kosher catered from a hekshered source.

## **Restaurants, bowling and other non-kosher venues.**

- When possible a menu specific to the event should be provided, listing pre-approved menu choices (*a pre-set menu will not work, for example, at sporting events where food booths supply individuals with a huge myriad of choices*).
- The venue must offer vegetarian or dairy menu items.
- The general principles of “**Biblical Kashrut**” (see **Definitions**, p.2) should apply at all non-kosher venues. This means that no biblically forbidden foods should be served, despite the fact that individuals are ordering and paying for their own meals.
- **Attendees at these events will use the following guidelines when ordering:**
  - No biblically forbidden foods (pork, shellfish, etc.) can be ordered.
  - No mixed dairy/meat items (e.g., cheeseburgers, meat lasagna, Reuben sandwich, etc.) can be ordered.
  - Each individual chooses either a meat, dairy or parve meal.
  - Don’t order a dairy desert or beverage when consuming a meat meal.
  - Everyone can sit together, regardless of the type of meal they have ordered.
- Be sensitive and respectful of other’s observance in making all decisions. Ask questions if you are unsure.

## **Passover Policies**

- Prior to the start of Passover, representatives of the Ritual Committee and Executive Board will be responsible for cleaning the kitchen and eliminating non-Passover items from the synagogue.
- Food required during the holiday for Oneg or Kiddush, will be provided solely by a designated member of the Executive Board or Ritual Committee.
- No other food shall be brought into the synagogue by anyone – member or non-member – from the time the kitchen is cleaned until after the end of Passover.

## **Charitable Food Collections**

- Non-kosher food may be brought into the synagogue for the purpose of charitable food collections. These items must be canned or sealed package, non-perishable items.

## Common mistakes and pitfalls

- ★ Please take note of the following that can lead to common mistakes:
  - Many packaged cakes and cookies (Entenmann's, Drake's, TastyKake, Nabisco, Keebler, Little Debbie, etc.) are kosher but not pareve.
  - Margarine and creamers (even when labeled "non-dairy") often contain milk based ingredients and are not pareve.
  - Packaged pies and pie crusts are often not kosher, or if kosher, contain dairy ingredients.
  - Most brands of marshmallows are not kosher. Kosher marshmallows may be found in the kosher aisle of the grocery store.
  - Packaged cake frostings often contain animal fats and are not kosher. Most kosher packaged cake frostings are dairy.
  - Most packaged cake and cookie mixes are not pareve.
  - *Do not rely on memory. Ingredients and recipes change. Products that were once kosher may no longer be kosher, and some products that once contained treif ingredients now are certified kosher. Products that were once pareve may now contain dairy (e.g. Wonder Bread Hot Dog and Hamburger Buns).*