

SHABBOS BODY CARE

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

Is it permissible to brush a sheitel on Shabbos? Does it matter if the hair is knotty or smooth? May I put pin-curls in my sheitel on Friday night so it looks fresh for Shabbos morning?

Brushing or combing a sheitel on Shabbos in the manner in which it is done during the week is forbidden. This is because one is sure to rip out some hairs from the netting while brushing. It is, however, permitted to smooth down the hair of a sheitel with a soft-haired brush. Preferably, a special Shabbos brush should be used for that. Putting a pin curl in a sheitel on Shabbos should be avoided.

Can you explain a bit about the problem of putting on makeup on Shabbos?

There are two forbidden Shabbos Labors which might be transgressed when using makeup; one is Memareiach, smoothing, and the other is Tzoveia, coloring. All poskim, without exception or debate, agree that any cream makeup, liquid makeup, lipstick, or makeup of any sort which contains cream or oil is strictly prohibited to use. They also agree that these forms of makeup may not be applied even on top of existing makeup to touch up, etc. While there is some discussion among contemporary poskim in regard to face powder or powdery substances which have no cream or oil base, Rav S.Z. Auerbach leaves no room for doubt as to his opinion on this question. He writes that "so long as the purpose is to color [the skin], even if it lasts only a short while, there is no basis to be lenient. This is especially true when the powder was intended for makeup and women color their faces in this manner; we find no source to be lenient."

If a piece of loose skin develops on my lip on Shabbos and it is very bothersome, am I permitted to remove it in some way? What about a hanging, half-broken fingernail or a painful hangnail?

There is no permissible method to remove small pieces of skin which are peeling around the lip area or any other area of the body.

When it comes to a hanging fingernail there is some more room for leniency. Many poskim rule that if the end of the nail has become detached for most of its width and it is causing pain, it may be removed either by hand or with the teeth, but not with a scissor or a nail file.

Is there a problem using baby wipes on Shabbos? If so, is there a permissible way in which to use

them?

When using baby wipes on Shabbos, we are concerned with violating the Shabbos Labor of Sechitah, Squeezing. If the wipe can be used without Squeezing then it may be used on Shabbos. A baby wipe that is slightly moist and is gently dabbed onto the diaper area would be an example of the permissible use of a baby wipe on Shabbos. However, a baby wipe that is very moist — and there are numerous types of wipes on the market ranging from very moist to hardly so — would be prohibited from use on Shabbos, and indeed, may even be muktzeh, since the slightest pressure applied upon it would cause Sechitah. Moreover, pressing any type of baby wipe — even one which is only slightly or moderately moist — against the baby's skin, and/or scrubbing the diaper area with it may also be forbidden, as such pressure would result in Sechitah. In actual practice, cleaning a baby who is wet or lightly soiled can generally be accomplished by gently dabbing a wipe on his skin. Indeed, one does not want to "squeeze" out any more moisture than necessary so as to eliminate the need to dry off the diaper area before putting on the diaper. When cleaning a baby who is more heavily soiled, however, one normally has to apply pressure to the wipe in order to clean the baby off. This becomes a case of Squeezing and may be forbidden on Shabbos.

Am I allowed to affix a brooch to an outfit on Shabbos? If so, do I need to take it off before Shabbos is over?

It is permitted to fix a brooch on an outfit on Shabbos, and there is no need to take it off before Shabbos is over.

If my son's button falls off his shirt on Shabbos, may I reattach it with a safety pin?

A minority opinion maintains that using a safety pin (or a straight pin) to connect fragments of a torn garment, to pin up a loose hem or to fasten a button to a garment, should be avoided on Shabbos. In their opinion, pinning is included in the Shabbos Labor of Sewing, since the safety pin binds two (or more) previously disconnected or torn parts of a garment, just as Sewing does.

But the vast majority of poskim maintain that it is permitted to use a safety pin on Shabbos. They explain that using a pin is not considered Sewing at all, since no thread or other bonding agent is being used. In addition, Sewing is defined as connecting two pieces of material into a single solid piece; an entity that could only be separated by the process of tearing or cutting. Using a safety pin to connect two pieces of fabric is similar to buttoning a shirt or zipping a zipper, which is not considered Sewing at all.

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