



MONSEL'S SOLUTION: THE SOLUTION TO MANY TAHARA PROBLEMS

One of the most difficult issues facing the practical, hands-on Chevra Kadisha member, involves dealing with דם - blood.

- What bandages and tubes to remove?
- How to stop and control bleeding?
- What constitutes blood that requires saving and burial, and what does not?

This difficulty is compounded by the fact that Halacha Seforim that deal with Tahara speak in very vague terms at best. They speak of bleeding from childbirth and death by accident, which until very recently were the circumstances most often leading to the existence of blood at a Tahara. However the advances of modern medical technology have given us the capability of prolonging life through all kinds of sophisticated surgical procedures, aided by intravenous, gastrointestinal, tracheal tubes and catheters and the frequent use of ostomies. These technological advances have caused the Tahara process to become more complex than ever, with few guidelines for us to follow.

There is a serious need to define the general Halachic rules that can guide us in these circumstances. The purpose of this article is to introduce and explain one very effective solution to assist us with many of the practical problems that we face. The use of Monsel's Solution.

Monsel's Solution (Ferric Sub-Sulfate Solution) is a coagulant that is used in medical treatment in certain instances (mainly in stopping superficial bleeding over a large area, such as the scraping of the skin in a biopsy). To be effective you must:

- A. Shake very well before each use.**
- B. Use Monsel's generously.**
- C. Never put a used or wet Q-Tip back into the bottle.**
- D. Use the Q-Tip brand swabs rather than other brands.**
- E. Fluff the cotton on the Q-Tip to maximize saturation.**

Some general guidelines for use in various situations:

- To control **puncture** bleeding: Saturate a Q-Tip with the solution and **insert into puncture**, spreading the opening of the puncture with the Q-Tip, thus allowing the greatest area of raw flesh to come in contact with the solution. This will cause a thin scab to form **immediately**. It will stop any flow of blood. It is best to repeat this procedure two or three times, leaving a residue of solution on the surface that will be washed away during the washing or Tahara. It will not stain the skin. Care must be taken not to pull at or agitate the skin around the puncture site after this procedure or the scab that was formed can be torn, allowing further bleeding to erupt. (Should that happen, repeat the procedure.)

- Where the puncture site is likely to be rubbed or pulled by the Tachrichim (mainly in the neck area) it is advisable to cover the puncture with a small piece of tape **after** the Tahara, before dressing.
- For areas of skin that are torn or abraded (scrapes, torn blisters or early stage bedsores): **Clean and dry area with a cloth**, then simply paint on the solution over the affected area with a well-saturated Q-Tip, covering all areas of the flesh that are oozing blood. For a large area and to get better saturation it is advisable to pull or agitate the cotton on the Q-Tip so that it is fluffy.
- When a puncture is very deep and the flow of blood is heavy: It is helpful to apply pressure with a finger about an inch from the puncture site and pull the skin a bit, very gently, thus clamping the vein or artery and stopping the flow of blood. Where the flow of blood may be heavy, it is worthwhile to pull fluffed cotton off the Q-Tip after saturation and insert it into the puncture with the edge of a scissors or clamp.
- For heavy flow of bleeding from larger openings, (nose or rectal bleeding or the bleeding at the edges of an autopsy Y-cut): Saturate a piece of combine dressing (surgical pad) or compressed cotton (WEBRIL) in solution and plug tightly into opening.
- When using Monsel's solution after the Tahara, the excess of solution should be removed by dabbing at it with a dry cloth, until clean. This will avoid soiling the Tachrichim.
- Whenever you insert packing that is saturated with Monsel's it is best to put a piece of tape over the site after the Tahara, before dressing.
- Monsel's solution will permanently stain clothing. **Be careful not to get it on your clothing or the clothing of other Chevra members.**

Monsel's has a shelf life of nine months to a year once it is opened. Monsel's comes in pint containers. A recommendation is to pour it into smaller 2-ounce opaque bottles with leak-proof caps, with the use of a funnel. These are available at any pharmacy. **Make sure to transfer only after shaking very well.** Smaller bottles can be ordered from the Association of Chevros Kadisha at: www.nasck.org.

MONSEL'S SOLUTION
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