



Physical Contact for Medical Purposes

The *halachos* related to physical contact for medical purposes can vary greatly based on the specifics of each situation. We will cite the relevant halachic principles, but it remains advisable to consult a *posek* before a man sees a female doctor, or vice versa.

18. It is halachically permissible for a man to make physical contact with a woman (and vice versa) when it is necessary for health reasons or to save her from danger. For example, a doctor or an EMT may treat a patient of the opposite gender. The reason for this is that the contact is exclusively for health purposes, not relationship-based. In addition, the doctor's mind is preoccupied at the time with medical treatment. (*Shach* YD 157:10, 195:20; *Darkei Teshuvah* YD 157:8; see *Igros Moshe* EH 1:56)

19. Nevertheless, the *poskim* note that as the contact is not always vital (i.e., not necessary for medical purposes and/or the mind is not fully preoccupied), one should only have treatments which involve physical contact performed by a member of the opposite gender when greatly necessary. (*Shevet Halevi* 3:186, 4:167; *Shiurei Shevet Halevi* end of 195; *Minchas Yitzchok* 7:73; *Be'er Moshe* vol. 3, 152:15 and vol. 4, 118:14; see *Igros Moshe* YD ? 54:1)