

ASK THE RABBI

Question: Why do we wait six hours after eating meat before eating dairy?

Answer: There are three prohibitions when it comes to meat and dairy together. The Torah forbids us from consuming eat and milk together, from cooking meat and milk together and from benefiting from combined meat and milk.

When one eats meat, the meat contains fats which stick to the mouth. One opinion holds that if we were to eat milk while those fats were still on our mouths we would be consuming meat and milk together. Another opinion holds that it is not the fats that concern us, but the pieces of meat that get stuck in our teeth.

Both opinions quote the Gemara that requires waiting a significant amount of time after eating meat before eating dairy. While most wait six hours, German Jews wait 3 hours and Dutch Jews wait only 1 hour.