

PLANNING A BRIS

Many people find the process of planning a bris to be overwhelming and confusing, mostly because they've usually just had a baby and have only a short time in which to plan. Luckily, there are actually only a few things that you need to do in order to plan a bris. Here is a quick checklist to help you get started:

Planning a bris quick to-do list:

1. Reserve a mohel (see list below)
2. Choose a location (see [Synagogues](#) and [Simcha Space Rental](#) sections.) The bris can also be at your house or the home of a friend or relative.
3. Figure out what food to provide (see section on [Catering](#)).
4. Work with your mohel to plan the ceremony. There is usually a very specific format to the ritual, which you can often supplement with personal additions as your mohel allows. (See some suggested resources below).

Most of the mohels listed below have websites offering lots of helpful information about their approaches, as well as explanations of the ritual. Each mohel will tell you what he or she requires you to have on hand for the bris, which varies from mohel to mohel (pillows, sturdy table, yarmulkes, kosher food, etc.).

While brises are often done in your home, they don't have to be. They can be done in a synagogue, in a friend's home, or at another location entirely. Many DC Minyan members hold brises at the Washington DC Jewish Community Center. Please see our section on [Simcha Space Rentals](#) and our section on [Synagogues](#) for more information on possible locations. Morning brises are most popular these days, though some mohels will perform them in the evenings. Be aware that all Orthodox and most Conservative mohels will not travel or answer their phones on Shabbat; also, they will insist the ritual be performed on the 8th day after birth, unless there are any medical reasons to delay the ritual.

MOHELs

This is not a complete list of mohels in the DC/MD/VA area; it is a list of mohels who have been personally recommended by people in the DC Minyan community. If you have a mohel that you would like to see included on this list, please feel free to email us at lifecycle@dcminyan.org with the name and contact information. The contact information on this list was accurate as of October 2009; please email us if you find that it is no longer accurate.

Dr. Habib Ahdoot

Phone: 703-960-7440 / cell 703-606-6163

<http://www.physiciansandmidwives.com/hahdoot.htm>

Training: Dr. Ahdoot was educated at the University of Tehran Medical College and completed his OB/GYN residency at the Washington Hospital Center. He is certified as a mohel through the Reform movement.

Dr. Andrew Engel

Phone: 301-320-6065

E-mail: andrewengel@verizon.net

Training: Dr. Andrew Engel trained as an Ob/Gyn at George Washington University, and currently practices with Foxhall OB-GYN Associates. He completed the Brit Milah Board of Reform Judaism course in 1995.

Rabbi Michael Henesch

Phone: 410-653-3255

E-mail: mhenesch@gmail.com

Webpage: <http://www.mysonsbris.com/>

Training: Rabbi Henesch was formally certified as a Mohel in Jerusalem by Rabbi Yitzchok Lang and interned at Hadassah and Laniado-Sanz Medical Center in Israel.

Rabbi Raphael Malka

Phone: 301-649-3042

Fax: 301-649-7832

E-mail: otbrit1@msn.com

Webpage: www.otbrit.com

Training: Rabbi Raphael Malka was certified as a Mohel in London, England, where he also received his ordination from Torat Emet Talmudical College.

Dr. Louis M. Marmon

Phone: 301-294-2684

Webpage: www.pedsurg-mohel.com

Training: Dr. Marmon is a practicing Pediatric Surgeon licensed in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. He is certified by the American Board of Surgery in General Surgery, Pediatric Surgery and Surgical Critical Care and is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons (FACS) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (FAAP). He has completed the Brit Kodesh course offered by the Rabbinical Assembly at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City for physician Mohalim.

Rabbi Abraham Rappaport

Phone: 1-877-MDMOHEL or 301-260-7590

Cell: 443-790-6541

E-mail: rabbi@mdmohel.com

Webpage: www.mdmohel.com

Training: Rabbi Avraham Rappaport is a certified Mohel, having received his ordination as a Rabbi through the Chief Rabbinate of the State of Israel.

Dr. April Rubin

Phone: 202-841-3329

E-mail: aprilrubin@dcmohel.com

Webpage: www.dcmohel.com

Training: Following completion of Internship and Residency training at the University of Chicago, April Rubin M.D. has practiced obstetrics and gynecology on Capitol Hill since

1982. In 2003 Dr. Rubin was designated a mohel (feminine: mohelet) in the Conservative Movement of Judaism after completion of the Brit Kodesh course at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

BRIS RESOURCES

The following websites and books are intended to help you in understanding and planning the ritual aspects of the brit milah ceremony. You will also find many helpful resources on the websites for the mohels listed above.

Please note, as with all sections of this resource guide, this by no means represents an exhaustive list of resources. We would welcome any and all suggestions for adding to the usefulness of this page. In addition, if our members have electronic file versions of programs or literature that they used when celebrating their son's bris and that they would be willing for us to post as part of a reference bank, please email us with attachments at lifecycle@dcminyan.org

<http://eng.itim.org.il/?CategoryID=197>

From the Jewish Life Information Center [ITIM] website, which provides in-depth information about all Jewish lifecycle events. This link contains details of the rituals associated with the ceremony, and practical information including guidelines on after-bris care.

"Simhat Lev: Celebrating a Birth," by Shulamit Magnus in *Lifecycles Volume 1: Jewish Women on Life Passages and Personal Milestones*. Ed. Rabbi Debra Orenstein (1994).

Describes a naming ceremony for a boy (but adaptable for girls) that took place a month after his birth (his *bris milah* was performed privately), which emphasizes entering the Covenant through special Torah readings and blessings. It suggests an alternative for those who want to de-emphasize circumcision.

Bris Milah: The Covenant of Abraham, a Compendium of Laws, Rituals, and Customs Anthologized from Talmudic and Traditional Sources by Rabbi Paysach Krohn. (Associated website by the author: <http://www.brisquest.com/>)