

Health Requirements and Recommendations
For Travelers to Saudi Arabia for Hajj and Umrah - 2018/1439H.

The Ministry of Health in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia has issued this document to address the health requirements and recommendations for visitors traveling to Saudi Arabia for the purposes of Umrah, Hajj, or seasonal works in Hajj and Umrah zones during the 1439H (2018) season.

Disease/Conditions of Special Importance during Hajj and Umrah:

Yellow fever:

The Ministry of Health in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia requires that all travelers arriving from countries or areas at risk of yellow fever transmission (see below) must present a valid yellow fever vaccination certificate. The yellow fever vaccination certificate is valid for life starting 10 days after vaccination.

Countries/areas at risk of yellow fever transmission, as per the WHO International Travel and Health guidelines, are:

- **Africa:** Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, the Republic of South Sudan, Togo, and Uganda.
- **Americas:** Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Surinam, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Aircrafts, ships, and other means of transportation arriving from countries affected with yellow fever are required to present a valid certificate of disinsection. They may be subjected to inspection as a condition of granting free pratique (including permission to enter a port, to embark or disembark, and to discharge or load cargo or stores).

Meningococcal meningitis:

Visitors arriving for Umrah, Hajj or for seasonal work in Hajj zones are required to submit a valid vaccination certificate with a tetravalent (ACYW135) meningococcal vaccine administered no less than 10 days prior to arrival to Saudi Arabia.

Vaccination with ONE of the following vaccines is acceptable:

- a) Tetravalent (ACYW135) polysaccharide vaccine within the last 3 years.
- b) Tetravalent (ACYW135) conjugate vaccine within the last 5 years.

Current scientific evidence suggests that conjugate vaccines are safe and effective for those above 55 years of age.

If the vaccine type is not indicated in the certificate, the certificate would be valid for 3 years.

Vaccination with tetravalent (ACYW135) conjugate vaccine is also required for:

- a) Domestic pilgrims.
- b) Residents of the two holy cities (Makkah and Medina).
- c) Any person who may get in contact with pilgrims including personnel in healthcare settings.

The Ministry of Health in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia may opt to administer prophylactic antibiotics to some travelers to at the points of entry if deemed necessary.

Poliomyelitis:

Travelers arriving from countries with circulating wild or vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV2) and from countries at risk of polio reintroduction are required to submit a valid polio vaccination certificate.

For travelers arriving from Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Somalia, the Republic of South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Yemen should present proof of vaccination with one of the following vaccines:

- a) At least one dose of bivalent oral polio vaccine (OPV) within the previous 12 months and administered at least 4 weeks prior to arrival.
- b) At least one dose of inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) within the previous 12 months and administered at least 4 weeks prior to arrival.

For all travelers arriving from the Democratic Republic of the Congo a proof of receipt of at least 1 dose of inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) within the previous 12 months and administered at least 4 weeks prior to arrival.

Travelers arriving from Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Somalia, the Republic of South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Yemen will also receive one dose of OPV at the border points on arrival into Saudi Arabia.

Seasonal influenza:

The Ministry of Health in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia recommends that all pilgrims get vaccinated against seasonal influenza.

Influenza vaccination is particularly important for pregnant women, children less than 5 years of age, adults over 65 years of age and individuals with specific health conditions such as obesity, bronchial asthma, chronic heart or lung diseases, HIV/AIDS and immune suppression.

Countries are encouraged to secure adequate quantities of the most recent influenza vaccine to be administered to those intending to perform Hajj. For this year's Hajj, the southern hemisphere vaccine is expected to be available before Hajj and the Ministry of Health in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia recommends all pilgrims to receive this vaccine at least 10 days prior to commencing hajj.

Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome Corona Virus (MERS-CoV) and other respiratory infections:

Efforts to prevent MERS-CoV infections during Hajj and Umrah have been successful. However, other viral respiratory tract infections are common. The Ministry of Health in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia recommends all pilgrims to comply with following:

- a) Wash hands with soap and water or a disinfectant, especially after coughing and sneezing, after using toilets, before handling and consuming food, and after touching animals.
- b) Use disposable tissues when coughing or sneezing and dispose of used tissues in a wastebasket.
- c) Wear regular masks when in crowded places.
- d) Avoid close contact with people who appear ill and avoid sharing their personal belongings. e) Avoid contact with camels in farms, markets, or barn.
- f) Avoid drinking raw milk or eating meat that has not been thoroughly cooked.

Zika Virus Disease and Dengue Fever:

The Ministry of Health in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia requires that aircrafts, ships, and other means of transportation coming from countries affected with the Zika virus and/or dengue fever to submit a certificate indicating that disinsection measures have been undertaken.

The Ministry of Health in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia recommends pilgrims to take necessary measures to avoid mosquito bites which include sleeping in air-conditioned rooms/tents and using insect repellents.

Food and Water-Borne Diseases:

Authorities in Saudi Arabia permit entry of food in small quantities in properly canned or sealed containers only. The Ministry of Health in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia recommends all pilgrims to observe the following:

- a) Wash hands before, after eating, and after going to the toilet.
- b) Thoroughly clean and wash fresh vegetables and fruit.
- c) Avoid eating improperly stored food.

Heat-Related Conditions:

The Ministry of Health in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia recommends all pilgrims, especially older individuals, to avoid direct sun exposure while performing rituals and to drink sufficient amount of fluids. Countries are requested to provide education on health-related illness to their pilgrims prior to travel. Medications that can exacerbate dehydration (e.g. diuretics) or interfere with heat exchange may need adjustment by treating physicians.

International Disease Outbreak Response:

In the case of a public health emergency of international health concern, or in the case of any event subject to notification under the International Health Regulations (2005), the health authorities in kingdom of Saudi Arabia will undertake all additional necessary measures in consultation with the WHO.

Hajj Medical Missions:

The Ministry of Health in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia requires the medical missions accompanying the pilgrims to comply with the following technical requirements:

- a) The mission should have at least one physician per 1,000 pilgrims accompanying the mission and at least 20% of the accompanying physicians in the medical mission should be public health physicians.
- b) Medical missions should have a valid medical waste contract with a certified local company that covers the entire Hajj season.
- c) Medical mission clinics should include at least one infectious diseases isolation room that meets MoH standards.
- d) The medical mission shall commit to reporting notifiable infectious diseases to the Saudi Arabian Health System using approved reporting methods.

Physical Ability and Health Education:

Pilgrims and relevant officials in countries of origin are encouraged to consider the physical ability and health conditions of individuals applying for Hajj and Umrah. Those with severe medical conditions such as terminal cancers, advanced cardiac, respiratory, liver, or kidney diseases and senility are exempt from these religious duties.

Health authorities in countries of origin are requested to provide basic health education to pilgrims prior to travel. This may include food safety, heat-exhaustion, and means of preventing infectious diseases.

The Ministry of Health in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia recommends all pilgrims to update their immunization status against vaccine-preventable diseases. This includes vaccination against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, varicella and mumps.