

Saudi Arabia

Hajj and Umra Health Regulations

The following Saudi Arabian Ministry of Health (MOH) requirements and recommendations will be in effect for travelers participating in Hajj 1440H (August 9-14, 2019) and/or the 2019-20 Umra season.

Travel Restrictions

Hajj visas are not available for persons coming from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Meningococcal meningitis

Proof of meningococcal vaccination (with either quadrivalent meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine or quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine) is required for travelers aged > 2 years arriving for the purpose of Umra or Hajj pilgrimage or seasonal work in Hajj/Umra zones, not less than 10 days and not more than 3 years (polysaccharide vaccine) or 5 years (conjugate vaccine; certificate must clearly state conjugate for 5-year validity to apply) before planned arrival in Saudi Arabia. Proof of vaccination with conjugate vaccine is required for domestic pilgrims, residents of Mecca and Medina, and any persons who might have direct contact with pilgrims in Saudi Arabia (e.g., health care workers [HCWs] or other authorities). Additionally, antibiotic chemoprophylaxis may be administered to certain travelers upon arrival if deemed necessary by port-of-entry officials.

Polio

Proof of polio vaccination is required for all travelers arriving from countries with circulating wild poliovirus or circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 and for those arriving from countries at risk of polio reintroduction.

- Proof of vaccination (at least 1 dose of inactivated poliovirus vaccine [IPV] or bivalent oral poliovirus vaccine [OPV]) given between 4 weeks and 1 year prior to arrival is required for travelers (regardless of age or previous vaccination status) arriving from Afghanistan, Burma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Syria, or Yemen.
- Regardless of vaccination status, travelers from Afghanistan, Burma, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen will also be given 1 dose of OPV upon arrival.

Influenza

Saudi Arabia recommends seasonal influenza vaccination with the most currently available vaccine at least 10 days prior to arrival in Hajj/Umra areas for all visiting pilgrims, particularly those at increased risk for severe complications, such as pregnant women, children aged < 5 years, adults aged > 65 years, or those with chronic or immunocompromised medical conditions.

- Southern Hemisphere vaccine is recommended for all pilgrims from the Southern Hemisphere or from countries which routinely use this vaccine.
- Vaccination with the most currently available vaccine is required for all domestic pilgrims and HCWs at least 10 days prior to arrival in Hajj/Umra areas.

Public health

Pilgrims are encouraged to observe good respiratory-hygiene (cough and sneeze etiquette) and hand-hygiene measures; to wear face masks, especially in crowded locations; to avoid contact or sharing personal belongings with ill-appearing persons; to avoid close contact with animals, especially camels; and to avoid consumption of raw camel milk, camel urine, or improperly cooked meat.

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

Efforts to prevent MERS-CoV infection during Hajj/Umra have been implemented; no known MERS cases have ever been reported in Hajj pilgrims.

Zika, chikungunya, and dengue

The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that transmits these diseases has not been detected in Hajj or Umra areas for years, although it

is present in surrounding cities. Travelers should observe daytime insect precautions.

Additional considerations

Persons who are elderly, chronically ill, immunocompromised, or pregnant may participate in the Hajj; however, the MOH notes that those with terminal cancer; advanced cardiac, respiratory, liver, or kidney diseases; and senility are exempt from Hajj and Umra duties.

Additionally, Shoreland recommends hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and typhoid vaccination and that all routine vaccinations (including MMR, polio [adequate primary series and 1 adult dose], Tdap, and varicella) be up to date.

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