

Health Conditions for Travelers to Saudi Arabia – Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj)

*Weekly Epidemiological Record** 2001, 76(7): 54-55

The Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia has issued requirements for the forthcoming Hajj season, as follows.

I. Yellow fever

(1) The following countries/areas are endemic for yellow fever:

Africa

Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan (north of latitude 15°), Togo, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania.

Americas

Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

All travellers arriving from countries known to be infected with yellow fever (as shown in the WHO Weekly epidemiological

record) must present a valid yellow fever vaccination certificate in accordance with the International Health Regulations. In the absence of such a certificate, the person will be vaccinated upon arrival and placed under strict surveillance for 6 days from the day of vaccination or the last date of potential exposure to infection – whichever is earlier. Health offices at entry points will be responsible for notifying the appropriate Director-General of Health Affairs, in the region or governorate, about the place of the residence of the visitor.

(2) Aeroplanes and other means of transportation arriving from areas infected with yellow fever are requested to submit a certificate indicating disinsection in line with International Health Regulations.

II. Meningococcal meningitis

(1) For all arrivals

Visitors from all over the world arriving for the purpose of "Umra" or pilgrimage or for seasonal work in the Hajj areas are requested to produce a certificate of vaccination against meningitis issued not more than 3 years and not less than 10

* <http://www.who.int/wer>

days before arrival in Saudi Arabia. The responsible authorities in the country from where the visitor comes must ensure that vaccination has been carried as follows:

- adults and children over the age of 2 years must be given 1 dose of the A/C vaccine;
- children between 3 months and 2 years of age must be given 2 doses of the A vaccine with a 3-month interval between the 2 doses.

(2) Arrivals from countries in the African meningitis belt, namely

Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan.

- It must be ensured that all visitors from these countries have been vaccinated in their countries, not more than 3 years and not less than 10 days before arrival. This should be documented on the vaccination certificate.
- Visitors from these countries will be checked at entry points to ensure that they are vaccinated. Suspect cases shall be isolated and preventive measures will be taken in respect of their direct contacts.
- If the authenticity of the vaccination certificate is felt to be questionable, revaccination is to be carried out.
- Chemoprophylaxis will be administered to all visitors from these countries to lower the carrier rate among them.

III. Epidemiological surveillance

Tight control is exercised at entry points in respect of pilgrims and "Umra" visitors, and through surveillance shall be made in respect of visitors coming from countries infected with diseases subject to the International Health Regulations, in addition to isolation of suspect cases and surveillance of their contacts.

IV. Foods

Foods carried by visitors and pilgrims are banned and not allowed into the country. Foods imported for commercial purposes shall be subject to the provisions of circulars No. 246/6/21 of 27/3/1408 (Hj); No. 274/6/21 of 11/4/1408 (Hj); and No. 1183/19 of 15/7/1410 (Hj).

The above, as well as all circulars issued in this respect, shall be strictly adhered to during the pilgrimage and "Umra" seasons.

Editorial note. The publication in the WR is to inform visitors of the full requirements for entry into the country; it does not mean an endorsement by WHO of all measures stipulated. Saudi Arabia is enforcing these measures in accordance with the International Health Regulations (1969), Third annotated edition, Part VIII, article 84 which states: "Migrants, nomads, seasonal workers or persons taking part in periodic mass congregations, and any ship, in particular small boats for international coastal traffic, aircraft, train, road vehicle or other means of transport carrying them, may be subjected to additional health measures conforming with the laws and regulations of each State concerned, and with any agreement concluded between any States".