

Your comprehensive guide to staying healthy at the Hajj



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The Hajj draws Muslim pilgrims from every corner of the globe. During this time, approximately 3 million Muslims gather in unity to perform and complete the religious rituals of Hajj. The Umrah, sometimes referred to as the minor pilgrimage also takes place annually in Saudi Arabia. The Hajj is the largest annual gathering of culturally diverse people in the world.

The Hajj occurs in the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar (Dhul-Hijjah) and will take place this year between the 13th and 15th of October.



1 - Health Risks at Hajj

- **Communicable/Infectious disease risks:**
 - ***MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)**
 - Meningitis
 - Diarrhoea and stomach problems
 - Influenza
 - Hepatitis B
 - Polio
 - Yellow Fever
 - Rabies

***What is MERS?**

The **Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus** is a new virus which emerged in September 2012 and as of August 2013; it has infected 91 people from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar and the UAE. It can and has caused severe illness and death. Although there is not a high risk of acquiring MERS, the Saudi Ministry of Health has introduced new entry requirements and special health precautions and we strongly recommend you adhere to all to ensure you have a safe and healthy Hajj (**see section 4: what precautions you should take**).

- **Non-Communicable risks:**
 - Fatigue/Exhaustion
 - Injuries and accidents
 - Sunstroke
 - Dehydration
 - Cold temperatures
 - Food/Water hygiene
 - Special Advice for women (**See section 7: special precautions for women**)
 - Insects/Animals

2 - Who is mostly at risk?

- The elderly over the age of 60-65.
- People with chronic conditions including respiratory diseases, cancer, diabetes, heart conditions, those with kidney problems and immune deficiencies.
- Pregnant women.
- Young children under the age of 12.

If you belong to any of these groups, it is strongly advised by the Saudi Ministry of Health and health professionals to postpone the Hajj this year.



3 - Vaccinations

All travellers attending the Hajj must be vaccinated with:

- The Meningococcal (ACYW135) vaccine

Recommended vaccines by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Health (Particularly those aged 65 and over):

- Flu vaccine

Pilgrims from African nations:

- Yellow Fever vaccine

Pilgrims from the African meningitis belt:

- In addition to the above requirements, chemoprophylaxis with ciprofloxacin 500mg tablets will be administered at port of entry to decrease the rate of carriers

4 - What precautions you can take

- Hand AND Respiratory hygiene is essential and must be maintained.
- Wear respiratory (surgical) masks, especially when in crowded places (see section 6: Rituals of the Hajj & what to watch out for).
- Cover mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- Wash hands with soap and water or disinfectant, especially after coughing and sneezing.
- Use disposable tissues when coughing or sneezing and dispose of them appropriately.
- Try as much as possible to avoid hand contact with the eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid direct contact with people with symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, expectoration (forcibly ejecting sputum), vomiting, and diarrhoea.
- Maintain good personal hygiene.
- Do not use unlicensed street vendors to get your head shaved as they may reuse razors imposing a risk of acquiring blood borne diseases like Hepatitis B.
- If you are on special medication, be sure you have a more than adequate supply for your journey and remember to take your daily doses.
- Ensure you have sufficient sun-care to avoid sunburn, heat stroke & heat exhaustion.
- Carry and drink adequate amounts of clean bottled water to avoid dehydration.
- Try to avoid peak times when completing rituals to avoid overcrowded environments.



5 - What you should take with you

For a full checklist, refer to **Section 9** for a complete checklist of recommended items to take on your journey.

- A basic first aid kit: including bandages, plasters, pain killers and insect repellent.
- Hand sanitizer: to disinfect your hands.
- Respiratory masks: to protect you from airborne infections in crowded places.

6 - Rituals of the Hajj and things to watch out for

Injuries & Accidents

Pilgrims often suffer minor injuries commonly sustained to the feet as a result of overcrowding.

Arafat & Mina

Towards the end of the Hajj, the rituals of Arafat and Ramy Al-Jamarat (stoning rite) are considered the most difficult as pilgrims leave their accommodation in Makkah for the tents in Mina and flock in masses to perform these rituals.

Be sure to adhere to designated schedules, walking lanes and avoid walking against traffic and pushing fellow pilgrims.

Rami Al-Jamarat (Stoning rite)

Be aware of overcrowding at this ritual as pilgrims can become very passionate during this rite. The risk of injuries as a result of stampedes during mass rituals is present, so avoid peak times whenever possible. If you are disabled, elderly or infirm; an appointed proxy can perform this ritual on your behalf.

7 - Special advice for women

Speak to your GP or visit your family planning clinic if you wish to prevent or delay menstruation during the Hajj.

The Saudi Ministry of Health does not advise you to undertake Hajj or Umrah if you are pregnant, however, if you are determined on making the journey, consult your GP and midwife for health advice and necessary vaccines.



8 - Special advice for the disabled

The Hajj is a physically demanding challenge and therefore should be carried out by those who are physically fit enough to complete the rites, you have no obligation to perform Hajj if you are not physically fit. If you suffer from a disability and still wish to perform the Hajj, be prepared and consult your physician and travel agent about your plans.

The Ministry of Hajj advice for the disabled is as follows:

Airport: There are facilities for the disabled at Jeddah airport. Your travel agent should ensure that airport staff are advised of your needs in advance.

Transport in the Kingdom: Buses are not equipped to handle wheel-chairs. Disabled pilgrims must ensure that they or their carer have made arrangements with private taxi firms for transportation in the Kingdom, either through your travel agent or through your service provider in the Kingdom.

Hotels: In general, hotels are not equipped for the disabled, with the exception of some of the top hotels. Again, it is crucial that you check with the hotel before booking, to explain your needs and to ensure they can be met.

Houses: Houses are not generally equipped for the disabled.

Grand Mosque, Makkah: The Grand Mosque is well-equipped for the disabled. It has escalators and ramps to enable wheelchairs to move easily from one level to another. Wheel-chairs are provided free of charge in the Grand Mosque but, if you need to ask someone to push your wheelchair, the porter will charge for his service.



9 - YOUR CHECKLIST ✓

Vaccinations

- Meningococcal ACYW135
- Flu

Documents

- Notarised copies of your passport
- Pilgrims arrival photo-ID Card, issued upon arrival to Jeddah. Carry ID card at all times
- 10 passport size photographs for use by authorities
- Vaccination Record Book
- Names and addresses of hotels you are staying in in Makkah and Madinah
- Plastic bracelet with the name, address and telephone number of your Tawafa Establishment printed on it.

Money

- Travellers checks/Saudi riyals

Luggage

- A waist pouch/backpack
- Clothing and bedding
- Two or three sets of Ihram
- 3/4 pairs of rubber slippers for use during Ihram

Medicines/Toiletries:

- Hand Sanitizer
- First Aid Kit**
 - Bandages
 - Plasters
 - Pain killers
 - Respiratory masks
 - Insect repellent
 - Diarrhoea tablets
 - Multivitamins
- Tooth brush, toothpaste, moisturizing and disinfecting hand soap, bath soap, shampoo, disposable razors, shaving cream, small mirror, comb, nail clippers and disinfectant, deodorant, tissues and toilet paper.

Miscellaneous

- Umbrella
- Prayer rug
- SIM cards. Monthly valid available over the counter in most phone shops. Make sure your phone is unlocked
- Small flashlight + extra batteries



10 – EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS / INFORMATION

Police: 999
Fire: 998
Ambulance: 997

Highway Patrol: 996
Traffic Accidents: 993
Telephone Directory Info: 905
International Information: 900

- If you manage to get lost during the Hajj then there are numerous Pilgrim Assistance Booths where you can find advice and directions.
- If you are travelling with a group, it is good practice to agree on a certain location and use that as a rendezvous point if you get separated.
- For safety reasons, adhere to the following instructions issued by the Saudi Ministry of Hajj when performing the ritual of casting the Jamarat:
 1. Adhere to the schedules designated for you by the Mutawwif.
 2. Adhere to the lanes designated for proceeding to the Jamarat and returning therefrom.
 3. Avoid pushing your fellow pilgrims and proceed quietly and calmly.
 4. Do not carry personal effects.
 5. Do not walk against the direction of the traffic.



Cut out the numbers below and keep on your person.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Police: | 999 |
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11 – GET IN TOUCH WITH US/QUESTIONS/USEFUL LINKS

If you have any questions regarding the guide or the Hajj, please contact us on Info@IDPH-Research.org

OR

Fill our online query form which can be found on our webpage
<http://www.idph-research.org/contact-us.html>

Find us Facebook, Twitter & LinkedIn: @IDPHRGroup



[Twitter](#)



[Linked In](#)



[Facebook](#)

Useful links:

[Association of British Hujjai](#)

[Council of British Hajjis](#)

[Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Saudi Arabia](#)

[Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Ministry of Health](#)

[Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Ministry of Hajj](#)

[Muslim Council of Britain](#)

[Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia](#)

