Health requirements for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims 2018

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The Ministry of Health of the Kingdom Saudi Arabia (KSA) have published their health requirements and recommendations for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims and seasonal workers [1]. Our Hajj and Umrah factsheet has been updated to reflect any changes.

Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Makkah (Mecca), in KSA is one of the largest gatherings of its kind in the world. The event occurs between the 8th and 12th day of the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar every year. This year it is predicted that Hajj 1439H will take place between 19 and 24 August 2018 [1]. Due to the large crowds, mass gatherings such as Hajj and Umrah are associated with unique health risks.

Pilgrims over two years of age who intend to undertake Hajj or Umrah and seasonal workers, are required to provide proof of vaccination against meningococcal disease ACW135Y to obtain a visa for entry in to KSA. A conjugate ACW135 meningococcal vaccine should have been administered not more than five years and not less than 10 days prior to entry in to KSA [2]. It is important to document the type of vaccine [e.g. conjugate vaccine], on the vaccination record. KSA state that the conjugate vaccines (Menveo or Nimenrix) confer protection for ‘at least five years’. Failure to document the type of vaccine will result in the certificate being valid for three years only. The polysaccharide meningococcal vaccine, ACWYVAX has not been available in the UK since 2014; persons who received this type of vaccine during and before 2014 should be offered revaccination with a conjugate vaccine.

Proof of ACWY vaccine is also required for residents of the two holy cities (Makkah and Medina) and any person who may get in contact with pilgrims including personnel in healthcare settings [2].

Health advisors 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 [1].

Further advice and recommendations for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, including advice on vaccinations required by KSA from pilgrims arriving from specific countries, general vaccine recommendations and information about non-vaccine preventable diseases and other health hazards, can be found in our factsheet.

Resources

- Hajj and Umrah factsheet
- Ministry of Health KSA Health requirements for travellers to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage to Makkah (2018/1439H Hajj)
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Advice Saudi Arabia - Pilgrimage

References
1. US Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Hajj and Umrah [Accessed 18 May 2018]