

### The essentials in brief

- Only healthy individuals should undertake the Hajj or Umrah pilgrimages.
- Routine vaccinations should be up to date; vaccination against meningococcal disease (A, C, W135, Y) is mandatory, and vaccinations against hepatitis A and B, polio, COVID-19 and influenza are recommended.
- Follow the rules on food, water and hand hygiene and wear a mask in crowded places.

Pilgrimages are important in the lives of devout Muslims. However, as is typical for large international gatherings, pilgrimages also carry health risks, which is why good preparation is particularly important. To ensure the safety of pilgrims in view of the high physical demands, the Saudi Ministry of Health has announced stricter medical regulations for 2026, according to which pilgrims will be required to obtain a health certificate in order to receive a visa. People with active infectious diseases or severe chronic conditions (renal failure requiring dialysis, severe heart/lung/liver disease, dementia, cancer undergoing chemotherapy or immunosuppressive therapy, high-risk pregnancies and pregnant women in their third trimester, severe mental illness and people who require constant assistance) will be excluded from the pilgrimage ([ministry of hajj and umrah, 2026](#)). It is emphasised that the regulations will be strictly enforced, as health certificates will be electronically linked to Hajj visa applications. Travellers who do not meet the requirements therefore risk being denied entry or being placed in immediate quarantine.

### Before departure

Check the following websites for the latest health, vaccination and entry requirements, as well as general recommendations:

- Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia ([www.moh.gov.sa](http://www.moh.gov.sa))
- Ministry of Hajj, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ([www.hajjinformation.com](http://www.hajjinformation.com)) and

Ensure that you have adequate international insurance cover.

### Vaccinations (see also [references](#))

- All pilgrims should have complete vaccination protection for routine vaccinations (diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, varicella) (see [Swiss vaccination schedule](#)).
- **Compulsory vaccinations:**
  - **Meningococcal meningitis (A, C, W135, Y):** All adults and children > 1 year of age **must** have received the meningococcal vaccination with the tetravalent conjugate vaccine (A, C, W135, Y) within the last 5 years and no less than 10 days prior to arrival. Proof of **vaccination** in the form of an international vaccination certificate is **mandatory** upon entry into Saudi Arabia.
  - **Influenza (seasonal flu vaccination):** Pilgrims must present a valid vaccination card showing that the flu vaccination was administered at least ten days and no more than one year prior to arrival at the Hajj and Umrah sites.
  - **Covid-19:** Pilgrims must present a valid vaccination certificate showing that they have received one dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine, provided that the vaccination was administered at least ten days prior to arrival. The vaccination is mandatory regardless of the number of COVID-19 vaccine doses previously received.
  - **Hepatitis A:** Vaccination against hepatitis A is recommended for all pilgrims and travellers.
- **Poliomyelitis:**
  - The following applies to persons travelling directly from Switzerland to Saudi Arabia: After completing the basic immunisation according to [Swiss vaccination schedule](#), all pilgrims are recommended to have booster vaccinations as follows:
    - Immunocompetent travellers <65 years of age: every 20 years
    - Immunocompetent travellers ≥65 years: every 10 years
    - Travellers with immunodeficiency: every 10 years
  - Persons travelling through a country where polio cases have been reported must provide proof of polio vaccination upon entry into Saudi Arabia: in this case, the inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) must have been administered within the last 12 months and at least 4 weeks prior to entry into Saudi Arabia. If IPV vaccination is not available, the oral

polio vaccine (OPV) is accepted with at least one dose if it was administered within the last 6 months and at least 4 weeks before entry into Saudi Arabia. If proof is not provided upon entry into Saudi Arabia, vaccination with an oral polio vaccine (OPV) will be administered.

- **Hepatitis B:** Vaccination against hepatitis B is strongly recommended. The reason for this is that Muslim men shave their heads after completing the Hajj pilgrimage. Therefore, be sure to bring disposable razor blades with you and visit licensed barbers whose shops are clearly marked as such to avoid infection with blood-borne pathogens (such as hepatitis B, C, HIV and others).
- A **yellow fever vaccination** is **mandatory** when entering Saudi Arabia if you are travelling from countries or areas with a risk of yellow fever (see Appendix 2 of [the KSA Document](#)).
- Further vaccinations depending on risk: see the Saudi Arabia country page at [www.healthytravel.ch](http://www.healthytravel.ch).

### Menstruation

As menstruating women are not permitted to perform the Tawaf (circling the Kaaba seven times) according to Muslim law, women may wish to discuss with their gynaecologist before the pilgrimage whether they would like to delay or suspend their menstruation.

### During the Hajj

- **Heat:** During the summer months, daytime temperatures can reach up to 50°C, leading to heat-related discomfort. Avoid spending too much time in the sun by using parasols and staying in the shade. Also, use sunscreen and drink plenty of fluids.
- **Hygiene:** Ensure optimal food, water and hand hygiene: wash your hands with soap and disinfect them, avoid raw and undercooked food, unpasteurised milk or tap water. Practise respiratory hygiene measures (wear a mask, keep your distance from other pilgrims if possible) to reduce the risk of respiratory infections such as COVID-19, MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) and influenza.
- **Diarrhoea:** Ensure immediate and adequate rehydration. Pack electrolyte solutions for rehydration (oral use). Seek medical attention in case of severe diarrhoea or simultaneous vomiting.
- **Rabies:** If you are bitten by an animal, wash the wound with soap, disinfect it and seek medical attention immediately to receive post-exposure rabies prophylaxis.
- **Mosquito protection:** Take measures to avoid mosquito bites, especially during the day, to prevent infectious diseases such as dengue fever.
- **MERS-CoV** is a coronavirus infection that occurs on the Arabian Peninsula. It can cause severe lung infection. The route of transmission is unclear, but the disease can be transmitted between humans and is very likely to be associated with close contact with camels or camel products (e.g. milk). The following groups of people are currently advised not to go on pilgrimage as they are at increased risk of MERS-CoV infection: people over 65, people with chronic diseases (e.g. diabetes, immunodeficiency, cancer, heart, kidney or lung disease), pregnant women and children.
- **Medical care:** Many medical facilities provide free healthcare for pilgrims. Alternatively, there are private hospitals that charge fees.

### After the Hajj

Seek medical treatment if you experience any health problems after the pilgrimage.

### References and information:

- <https://saudivisaoffice.com/hajj-health-rules-tightened-king-salman-gate-project-launched/>
- Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: <https://my.gov.sa/en/content/hajj-umrah>
- Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Saudi Arabia: Hajj and Umrah Pilgrimages: <https://www.cdc.gov/yellow-book/hcp/africa-middle-east/saudi-arabia-hajj-and-umrah-pilgrimages.html>
- <https://www.emro.who.int/cpi/programmes/umrah-hajj-safety.html>
- <https://hajj.nusuk.sa/nusuk/health/guidelines>
- Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia:
  - <https://www.moh.gov.sa/en/HealthAwareness/Pilgrims-Health/Approved-Vaccines/Pages/FAQ.aspx>
  - <https://www.moh.gov.sa/en/HealthAwareness/Pilgrims-Health/Approved-Vaccines/Pages/default.aspx>
  - <https://www.haj.gov.sa/Hajj>