

20 May 2024

Hajj 1445H and Umrah update: 2024

Information for pilgrims planning to perform Hajj or Umrah in 2024

Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Makkah (Mecca) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is one of the largest gatherings of its kind in the world. This year, Hajj 1445H is due to start in June.

Umrah is a shorter, non-compulsory pilgrimage for Muslims which can be undertaken independently at any time of the year.

Our [Hajj and Umrah factsheet](#) has been reviewed and updated with the up to date requirements and recommendations for pilgrims preparing for travel to KSA in 2024.

Due to the large crowds, mass gatherings such as Hajj and Umrah are associated with unique health risks [1].

All pilgrims to Hajj and Umrah require proof of meningococcal ACWY vaccination administered at least 10 days prior to arrival in KSA. The ACWY vaccinations available in the UK are conjugate vaccines, and this should be recorded on the record card for five-year validity. Proof of vaccination is a requirement for all individuals 1 year of age and older arriving for Hajj (including seasonal workers in Hajj zones) and Umrah. Large outbreaks of meningococcal disease, including meningitis and septicaemia, have occurred during previous Hajj pilgrimages [2]. In May 2024, 12 cases of meningococcal disease were reported from travellers who had performed Umrah while in KSA. Most of these cases were infected with meningococcal serogroup W and had not received a MenACWY vaccine [3].

The meningococcal B and C vaccinations given to children in the UK vaccination schedule will not provide adequate protection. Unlike MenACWY vaccine, these vaccinations do not protect against the W serogroup which has been linked to outbreaks at Hajj in previous years [2].

As Hajj 1445H (2024) starts in June, temperatures are likely to be high. Pilgrims should be prepared and take steps to reduce the risk of heat related illness. See our Hajj and Umrah factsheet for further details on this and other recommendations for pilgrims.

Resources

- [Country Information](#)
- [Hajj and Umrah factsheet](#)
- [The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Ministry of Health](#)

References

1. Aldossari M, Aljouadi A & Celantano D. Health issues at the Hajj pilgrimage: a literature review. *EMHJ*, Vol 25, No 10, 2019 [Accessed 20 May 2024]
2. Yezli S, Bin Saeed AA, Assiri AM et al. Prevention of meningococcal disease during the Hajj and Umrah mass gatherings: past and current measures and future prospects. *Int J Infect Dis*. 2016 Jun;47:71-8. [Accessed 20 May 2024]

3. [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Cases of invasive meningococcal disease reported in travellers returning from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. 17 May 2024 \[Accessed 20 May 2024\]](#)