



Hajj travel advice

The Hajj pilgrimage

The Hajj is the annual religious pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia involving millions of pilgrims from around the world. The Hajj takes place from the 8th through the 12th of Dhu al-Hijja, the last month of the Islamic year. As the Islamic calendar is lunar, the timing of Hajj varies with respect to the Gregorian calendar. Umrah is a similar pilgrimage that can be undertaken at any time of year.

Update for 2022

The Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah announced on 9 April 2022 that one million international and domestic pilgrims will be given permission to perform Hajj from 7 to 12 July. Each country will be allocated a quota of pilgrims.

Pilgrims should check the latest information before making plans or departing Australia including:

- [Smartraveller](#) for advice on safety issues, healthcare and health risks and entry requirements
- A [comprehensive guide for applying to perform Umrah](#), produced by the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah.

All Hajj pilgrims arriving in Saudi Arabia must follow [local rules](#) on health prevention made by the government of Saudi Arabia.

Pilgrims returning to NSW after Hajj should meet the [Australian Government entry requirements](#) and follow the NSW [guidelines for international arrivals](#) to help protect themselves, their loved ones and the community.

Travel advice from the Saudi Arabian government

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Ministry of Health provides [health advice](#) for pilgrims travelling to perform Hajj and Umrah.

This includes advice that pilgrims should consider their physical ability and health conditions prior to applying for Hajj and Umrah. In 2022, pilgrims must be aged less than 65 years to perform Hajj. Those with severe medical conditions such as terminal cancers, advanced cardiac, respiratory, liver, or kidney diseases are exempt from these religious duties.

Pilgrims travelling to perform the Hajj or Umrah can reduce their risk of illness and injury through simple precautions taken [during](#) and [after](#) their pilgrimage.

Protecting yourself from respiratory illnesses

[COVID-19](#), [influenza](#) and [MERS-CoV](#) are viruses that cause respiratory illnesses. They can spread from person to person through close contact. Pilgrims living and travelling in close quarters, or in crowds, may be at risk.

Pilgrims can help protect themselves and others from respiratory illnesses:

- don't attend Hajj or Umrah if you feel unwell. Perform rituals in your room or accommodation
- wash your hands often or use hand sanitiser
- wear a face mask in crowded places
- don't touch your mouth, nose, or eyes
- avoid contact with sick people
- don't share drinks and eating utensils.

General health advice for Hajj pilgrims

Before you travel

Make an appointment to see your GP or travel clinic at least four weeks prior to departure to discuss your fitness to travel, what vaccines you need and what health precautions you should take.

If you take regular medicines, make sure you take enough to cover the whole time you will be away and carry a doctor's letter to avoid confusion at customs.

Review the advice published each year on the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Health website which includes advice on the health requirements for receiving entry to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj.

Vaccinations

All travellers should be up to date with their routine vaccinations including those against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (dTpa) and polio.

Hajj pilgrims must show [proof of COVID-19 vaccination](#) with an accredited vaccine.

Following outbreaks of [meningococcal disease](#) in past years, all Hajj pilgrims must show proof of meningococcal vaccination before Hajj visas can be issued. Hajj pilgrims must have had a quadrivalent (A/C/Y/W135) meningococcal vaccination within the previous 3 years (for polysaccharide vaccines) or previous 5 years (for conjugate vaccines) and at least 10 days before arriving in Saudi Arabia.

Travellers from countries or areas at risk of [Yellow Fever](#) must also carry a valid Yellow Fever vaccination certificate.

[Seasonal influenza vaccine](#) is also recommended for pilgrims. Information on flu vaccination is available in [your language](#).

You should ask your GP or travel clinic if you need any additional vaccines such as those against pneumococcal pneumonia, hepatitis A, hepatitis B and typhoid.

Complete your vaccinations at least 2 weeks prior to departure.

Tips to manage health risks during Hajj

- Avoid the most densely crowded areas and, when options exist, perform rituals at non-peak hours. Overcrowding can increase the risk of infections such as COVID-19, meningococcal disease, influenza and pneumonia.
- Drink water and beverages that are sealed or known to have been purified. Eat food that is served piping hot or fruit that you have peeled yourself. Diarrheal disease (diarrhoea) is common during Hajj due to drinking water or food becoming contaminated in the crowded and hot conditions.
- Stay well hydrated, wear sunscreen, and seek shade when possible. Some Hajj rituals may also be performed at night to avoid daytime heat. Cardiovascular disease (such as heart disease and strokes) and heat-related illness are the major causes of death in travellers to the Hajj.
- Follow road safety rules to avoid injuries. Take extra care when crossing roads and always wear a seatbelt when travelling in motor vehicles. Road traffic accidents are also a major cause of injury and death as pilgrims may walk long distances near or through heavy traffic.
- Shave using disposable blades at officially designated centres or use your own disposable blades and avoid sharing personal hygiene tools. Unclean razors can transmit viruses such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV.
- Avoid direct contact with camels, undercooked camel meat and raw camel milk.

What if I get sick while I am overseas?

- If you get sick while you are overseas, seek medical attention. This is especially important if notice symptoms of meningococcal disease such as fever, headache, nausea and vomiting, weakness, neck stiffness and a rash. If you develop any of these, seek medical attention immediately.
- Drink plenty of fluids made up with oral rehydration salts (ORS) to avoid dehydration and diarrhoea.

What if I get sick after I return home?

- If you become unwell after you return to Australia, talk to your doctor and tell them you recently travelled to the Middle East.
- This is really important if you develop a fever, cough or shortness of breath within 14 days after returning from your trip.