

# Saudi Arabia announces health regulations for Haj visa application

The health regulations for Haj this year focus mainly on yellow fever, meningitis and polio

- By Abdulnabi Shaheen, Correspondent
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Riyadh: The Saudi Ministry of Health on Tuesday issued health regulations that Umrah and Haj pilgrims should fulfill to get their Haj visa applications approved.

"The health regulations for Haj this year focus mainly on yellow fever, meningitis and polio in addition to vaccinations against seasonal flues," Dr. Khalid Al Mirghalani, director of Media Relations in the Saudi Ministry of Health said in a statement.

He said a pilgrim coming from countries affected by yellow fever should submit a valid vaccination certificate, inline with the International Health Regulations.

The Certificate must state that the holder is vaccinated against yellow fever before 10 days of the arrival to the Kingdom and no more than 10 years ago.

Aircrafts, ships and other means of transportations coming from countries affected by yellow fever are requested to submit a valid certificate stating the eradication of insects (mosquitoes) on board according to the International Health Regulations, the statement said.

The following countries feature in the ministry's list of countries where yellow fever is found: Angola, Benin, Sudan, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Burundi, Chad, Uganda, Congo, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Togo, Kenya, Liberia, Sutomi and Principe, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Mali, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Brazil, Bolivia, Suriname, Peru, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina and Paraguay.

The statement added that Haj and Umrah pilgrims coming from all countries should be informed that they must carry a valid vaccination certificate of ACYW135 against meningitis 10 days before coming to the Kingdom and not more than 3 years ago.

If any pilgrim does not fulfill this regulation, his government will be responsible for any health consequence.

This regulation is also binding on all seasonal workers and other travelers coming to Saudi Arabia from a foreign country.

Health Authorities in other countries must make sure that children (2 years old and above) and adults are vaccinated with ACYW135.

The fact about their vaccination from their countries of origin should be recorded in their health documents, the statement said.

With regard to polio the statement said the Saudi embassies in the following countries should see that children less than 15 years are administered the Oral Polio Vaccine before 6 weeks from the arrival date. Such children will have another dose when they arrive in the Kingdom.

The countries are Uganda, Kenya, Benin, Angola, Togo, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Central African Republic, Chad, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Ethiopia and Nepal.

On the other hand in the case of Nigeria, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan children of all ages should be vaccinated with Oral Polio Vaccine and all children will have another dose when they arrive in the Kingdom, the statement said.

The ministry also recommended all pilgrims coming from foreign countries to take vaccinations against seasonal influenza particularly those who suffer from heart diseases, kidney diseases, respiratory diseases, neurological diseases and diabetes apart from those have acquired or congenital immunodeficiency, metabolic diseases, pregnant women and overweight people.

The ministry also warned the pilgrims against bringing in any kind of food from their countries unless if it is canned or sealed. In the case of road passengers the food cans should be easily opened for checking and only in sufficient quantities required for traveling, according to the statement.

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