

Health Guidelines

For

Hajj and 'Umrah



Dr. Farouk Haffejee

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

**LABBAIK ALLAHUMMA LABBAIK...
HERE I AM PRESENT, O' ALLAH, I AM PRESENT...**

"And pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon men for the sake of Allah, upon everyone who is able to undertake the journey to it"– (3:96 *Qur'an*)

"And complete Hajj and 'Umrah in the service of Allah....." (*Qur'an* 2:196)

"For Hajj are the months well-known. If anyone undertakes that duty therein, let there be no obscenity, nor wickedness, nor wrangling in the Hajj and whatever good you do, (be sure) Allah knows it. And take a provision (with you) for the journey, but the best of provisions is right conduct. So fear Me, O you that are wise!" (*Qur'an* 2:197)

"There is no sin on you if you seek the Bounty of your Lord (during pilgrimage, by trading). Then, when you leave „Arafat, remember Allah at the *Mash'ar-il-Haram* (Muzdalifah). And remember Him (by invoking Allah for all good) as He has guided you, and verily, you were, before, of those who were astray." (*Qur'an* 2: 198)

The Beloved Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) is reported to have said:

"Islam was built on five pillars: The *Shahaadah* - declaration - that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, performing prayer, giving Zakaat, performing *Hajj*, and fasting Ramadan." (Hadith- Bukhari,Muslim)

"Whoever performs the *Hajj* and commits no lustful act during it nor disobeys Allah (in any other way) shall return from it as pure and sinless as he was at the time of his birth." (Bukhari & Muslim)

"From one „*Umrah* to another (i.e. the two „*Umrahs*) become an atonement for the sins committed during the period intervening between them and the reward on *Hajj-e-Mabroor* (i.e. pure and untainted *Hajj*) is paradise itself and nothing less." (Bukhari & Muslim)

"Those who make the pilgrimage for the *Hajj* or '*Umrah* are the guests of Allah. The petitions they make will be granted and if they seek deliverance from sins, their sins will be forgiven." (Ibn-Maja)

ISBN 970-0-9802737-3-1

An Islamic Medical Association Publication.

Any part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior consent of the publisher. Please acknowledge author. Feedback on this publication will be welcomed.

Dr. Farouk Haffejee
M.B.Ch.B. FCFP.
Tel: +27312072269
farouk.haffejee1@gmail.com

About the author:

Dr. Farouk Haffejee is a Family Physician. He has had an interest in Health during *Hajj* for over 15 years. He presented the information in the form of a pamphlet which was distributed far and wide. It has been translated into many languages all over the world. In 2004, he wrote a booklet on the subject. He has appeared in National and International radio programmes discussing health issues during *Hajj* and „*Umrah*“.
This book contains the latest information.

September 2011

Published by:
Islamic Medical Association of South Africa.
Tel: +27312072250
imakzn@eastcoast.co.za

If you have any corrections, comments or questions about this publication, please feel free to contact us.

Health Guidelines for *Hajj and 'Umrah*

By

**Dr. Farouk Haffejee
MBChB. FCFP**

Acknowledgement of Assistance

I would like to thank Dr. Ebrahim Khan for the assistance he has given me.

**Proof reading:
Ameena Haffejee
B.A. UED.**

YouTube Links for a Summary of this Book

TYPE IN SEARCH BAR ON YOUTUBE:

Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah*

OR

Search individual topics below:

- No.1.** Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah* – Physical Fitness
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RqzEvryQkyQ>
- No.2.** Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah* – Diabetes
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTIFjQGuExc&feature=mfu_in_order&list=UL
- No. 3.** Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah* – Chronic Illnesses
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffor7nIwaWY&feature=related>
- No. 4.** Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah* – Chronic Skin Problems.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWONBuSx5Yk&feature=mfu_in_order&list=UL
- No. 5.** Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah* –Dental and Back Care
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KG-FUF144Cs&feature=mfu_in_order&list=UL
- No. 6.** Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah* – Incontinence and Hajj and Umrah.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldtryZwRNzw&feature=related>
- No. 7.** Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah* – Menses and Hajj or Umrah.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wE86tjzS4Ik&feature=related>
- No. 8.** Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah* – Immunisations.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDyB9RJGweo&feature=related>
- No. 9.** Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah* – Medicines to Take with you.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChfQG28uQIU&feature=related>
- No. 10.** Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah* – Flight Problems
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8-_twXhp1A&feature=related
- No. 11.** Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah* - Acclimatisation
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNUYeKmU0aw&feature=related>
- No. 12.** Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah* – Inconveniences during Hajj.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqpyucs9Ok&feature=related>
- No. 13.** Health Guidelines for *Hajj* and '*Umrah* – More Inconveniences

CONTENTS

	Page number
Introduction	7
Climate in Saudi Arabia	9
Before Departure: Physical Fitness	10
Attention to Chronic Illnesses	13
Diabetes	13
Hypertension or High Blood Pressure	15
Gout	15
Asthma	16
Arthritis	17
Dry Skin Conditions (Lichen Planus, Eczema, Psoriasis)	17
Glaucoma	18
Dental Care	18
Back Problems and Hajj and „Umrah	18
Incontinence and Hajj and „Umrah	19
Menses and Hajj and „Umrah	19
Immunisations	21
Fungal Infections	22
Medicines to take with you	22
During Your Journey - Venous Thrombosis	23
Dehydration	24
Neck Strain	24
Performing Salah on the aircraft	24
During your Stay in Saudi Arabia	24
Swelling of Feet	24
Skin Rashes and Dryness of Skin	25
Hydration	25
Heat Exhaustion	26
The Well of <i>Zam Zam</i>	26
Food and Vitamin supplements	27
Infections	28
Constipation	29
The Marble Floors	29
The <i>Tawaf</i>	29
Spectacles	30
Managing with the Crowd	30
Cracked Heels	32
Friction Burn or Shafing on the Inner Thighs.	32
Sleep Deprivation	33
Space for <i>Salah</i>	33
Medical Missions	34
The Wearing of Tobbs or <i>Kurtas</i>	34
<i>Ziraret</i>	34
A Week before <i>Hajj</i> Begins	35
The Five days of <i>Hajj</i>	35

Introduction

Islam consists of seven articles of faith and five fundamental pillars

Articles of Faith:

1. Belief in One God (Allah, a name given by Allah *SWT* Himself)
2. Belief in the existence of Angels of Allah *SWT*.
3. Belief in all the Prophets of Allah *SWT*, from Adam *AS* and Hawa *AS* through Nuh, Ibrahim, Sulaiman, Dawood, Musa, Isa (Jesus) to last Prophet of Allah, Muhammad *SAW*. May Allah *SWT* be pleased with all of them.
4. Belief in all the Books of Allah *SWT* – the original Psalms of Dawood *AS*, *Torah* of Musa *AS* (Old Testament), *Injeel* of Isa *AS* (the New Testament), and the last Testament, the *Qur'an*.
5. Belief in the Hereafter (Heaven and Hell).
6. Belief in Fate – the decree that good and bad that happens in life, is pre-determined by the Will of Allah *SWT*.
7. Belief in the Day of Judgement.

Five Fundamental Pillars of Islam:

1. The declaration of belief in One Allah, Who is worthy of worship without any partners, and the belief in Prophet Muhammad *SAW* as the last Messenger of Allah.
2. Daily prayers or *Salah*, which are performed five times a day.
3. Fasting during the month of *Ramadhan*.
4. *Zakat* – a compulsory annual excise of 2.5% on accumulated wealth to be distributed to the poor..
5. *Hajj* – the pilgrimage to Makkah during the month of *Dhul Hijjah*, the 12th and last month on the Islamic calendar, at least once in a lifetime for every mature, able-bodied Muslim who can afford it.

The performance of *Hajj* is obligatory on all adult Muslims who have the means to make the trip to the Holy City of Makkah. „*Umrah* is regarded as a minor pilgrimage with only part of the required rituals performed. Whosoever enters the *Mi'qaat* (boundary of the Holy Land) has to perform „*Umrah*, which includes *Tawaf* (seven circuits around the Holy *Ka'bah*) and *Sa'i* (seven times between Mount Safa and Mount Marwa).

Good health makes it easier not only to enjoy *Hajj* and „*Umrah* for the pleasure of Allah *Subhanahu Wata'ala (SWT)* but also to make maximum use of the opportunity to make as much „*Ibadah* as possible.

Health plays a major role in fulfilling the requirements of *Hajj* and „*Umrah* as these can be physically demanding depending on circumstances prevailing at the time.

Hajj is one of the largest annual pilgrimages in the world, with crowds of 3 and 4 million people, participating in rituals, which often have to be done within a certain time frame. That puts immense pressure on the authorities to provide the infrastructure required for such large groups of people. The *Hajj* authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia do a sterling job of providing the amenities and controlling the large crowds.

Besides fulfilling the religious requirements, *Hajj* also provides an opportunity for Muslims to show their solidarity, despite different races, ethnicity, colours and creeds.

This book is a guide and must be accompanied by your own Doctor's advice pertaining to your own health needs.

Most people especially from countries where there is a high level of poverty, spend a life time collecting funds for this incredible journey to the holy land. Others have to wait on a waiting list for many years, as there are quotas imposed by the Saudi Arabian Hajj Authorities on all countries to limit the numbers performing Hajj in any given year. The number of people performing *Hajj* in any year varies between 3.5 million to 4 million. If there were no quotas imposed, Saudi Arabia would be flooded with pilgrims annually, much higher than 4 million, *Alhumdulillah*, the numbers too many for any country to handle adequately.

The vast majority of people who perform *Hajj* are poor people or people who have struggled to put together enough funds for the journey. We can now see how important it is for us to take this journey seriously. We need to be in good physical and spiritual state to make maximum use of the opportunity given to us by Allah *SWT*. After all, we are invited by Allah *SWT* to the holy land. Without this invite, it is impossible to make the journey.

If we are in good physical shape, we are able to perform the rituals of *Hajj* and „*Umrah* with ease. Our concentration on *Ibadah* would be high as we would not need to concentrate on our physical weaknesses. Hence, it is important for us to make sure that we are physically fit and that all our chronic ailments are under control. To achieve this, we need to start at least 3 months before *Hajj* to bring our bodies to the physical shape that would give us peak health.

We are very fortunate that many Doctors also go to perform *Hajj*. They are all very helpful in sorting out any problems. They usually do not carry medication with them. Therefore, it is important to carry enough of your own.

Prevention of events and correcting any problems that arise speedily are very important in making sure that we all have a wonderful, spiritually rewarding stay in Saudi Arabia. If we go in poor health and physically unfit, we may make it difficult for other people. We may even compromise their *Hajj* or „*Umrah*.

One challenging aspect is that people from different countries of the world speaking different languages, come together for a single purpose and that is to worship Allah *SWT*. It is wonderful to hear people speaking different languages, all created by Allah *SWT*. There is no need to ridicule people or look down on them just because they do not do things according to how we do things. Many come from a rural background with very little knowledge of city life. Getting onto or off an escalator becomes a daunting task for these people. We need to be as helpful as possible to all around us. Isn't that one of the main objectives of performing *Hajj*?

The Makkah Health Affairs Department in the 1431 – 2010 *Hajj*, provided 3000 extra hospital beds for pilgrims. Critical and emergency services were provided at the hospitals. There were also 31 Health centres in and around Makkah, providing necessary treatment and medicines to millions of pilgrims. There were five Health Centres inside the Grand *Musjid*, five others in the shopping centres around the Grand

Musjid and five Health Centres at the car parks along the Makkah-Jeddah Expressway. The rest were in Azizia, Mina, Muzdalifah and „Arafat. (*Hajj News* 1431-2010).

The *Hajj* authorities go out of their way to make sure that we are comfortable and that we have a safe passage during the different rituals during „*Umrah* and *Hajj*. The security personnel are very friendly and would go out of their way to help in very trying situations. We need to assist them in complying with rules and regulations. We need to obey commands as they are trying their best to accommodate us. The rest is up to us.

Climate in Saudi Arabia

Jeddah is on the coast of the Red Sea and therefore enjoys a slightly humid climate in summer. It becomes less humid in winter.

Makkah is about 70 kilometers inland. It has an escarpment around it. One of the most famous sources of drinking water is from the Holy well of *Zam Zam* . Most of the water from bore holes and wells is brackish, unfit for human consumption. Because of the escarpment, the climate is dry and harsh. There is very little vegetation in and around Makkah due to the low rainfall. The Great Arabian Desert is all around Makkah. The climate is dry. Temperatures are extremely high, usually in the forty degree Celsius range and sometimes going into the fifties in summer.

Madinah is situated about 500 kilometers north and is about 150 kilometers from the coast. It is a large oasis with the Great Arabian Desert all around it. Because of the numerous wells providing excellent water, it has date orchards spreading out on to the outskirts of the city. The climate is dry and hot. In winter, it can become cool to cold especially around *Tahajjud* and *Fajr* times.



Hajj 1372 - 1953

Before Departure

1. Physical Fitness

Because of the number of people performing *Hajj*, situations will invariably arise that would compel us to walk long distances, climb stairs or hills, bend and straighten up as in *salah*, lift heavy items, like luggage, etc. Unless you are a person who engages in strenuous physical activities or is a regular gym goer, we have to exercise our bodies to develop strength, flexibility, co-ordination and confidence. Exercises also make us balance better, very important in the elderly. Exercise should start about 3 months before departure. If this amount of time is not available, any length of time will do as long as some exercising is done before departure.

Why do we need to be physically fit?

For us to understand the reason to be physically fit, we need to look at what and how much activity we need to do in Saudi Arabia from the time we arrive for the pilgrimage. Some people go to Madinah *Munawwara* first to greet *Rasulullah SAW* and to visit the historical sites. Others perform *Umrah* first by going directly to Makkah *Mukarrama*. If we go to Madinah first we do have a chance to rest more. Walking distances can be long from the hotels to the *Haram, Jannatul Baqi*, etc. In most cases, we will be looking at walking about 2 km for each *salah*. These distances need to be negotiated 5 times a day, unless we stay in the Musjid for the next *salah*. There is also a lot of walking when visiting historical sites.

On entering Makkah *Mukarrama*, we need to perform *Umrah*. On most occasions, the bus will leave us a distance away from the hotel because of road closures to cater for pedestrian traffic or because of traffic jams. This would require us to walk to the hotel with some of our luggage. Remember that at this stage, we are in *Ithram*. This makes it more awkward. There is a fair walk from the hotel to the *Haram* and from the *Haram* back to the Hotel, depending on where our hotel is situated.

Umrah requires us to perform 7 circuits around the *Kabah Shareef* in an anti-clockwise direction. On a quiet day when the crowds are thin, it would still require us to walk at least 200 metres a circuit, making it 1.4 kilometres (km) over 7 circuits. On a busy day, this can escalate to 400 to 500 metres per circuit making it around 3.5 km. Walking in a crowd also presents the problem of taking short steps over a long period. This can be quite tiring. This can result in muscles cramps. This can be physically demanding.

Tawaf is followed by a *dua* at *Multazam*, the area between the *Hajare Aswat* and the door of the *Ka'bah Shareef*. This is followed by *salah* at *Makame Ibrahim*, followed again by a *dua*, followed by drinking *Zam Zam* water and making the appropriate *dua*. Because of the crowds, these actions also take time with walking, standing and dodging the crowds most of the time.

To complete the *Umrah*, we then need to perform *Sai'* between Mount Safa and Mount Marwa. The distance between Safa and Marwa is 500 metres. Seven circuits here would result in walking 3.5 km. Then there is the long walk back to the hotel. You can see how demanding this can be especially for those who are unfit, overweight, sick, have disabilities and for those who are elderly. In total, we may have to walk around 10 km for the whole *Umrah*.

Hajj can be performed walking throughout, partially walking or taking a bus. If you are taking a bus, there would be some walking from the accommodation to the bus, depending on how close the bus can get to our accommodation and also from the bus

to the next accommodation. Besides this, it is fairly comfortable. Those performing *Hajj* walking throughout need to understand the distances involved in the walk. From Makkah to Mina, it is approximately 3 km. Mina itself is about 3 km in length. From Mina to Muzdalifah, it is approximately 3 km. From Muzdalifah to *„Arafat* border, it is about 7 km. From the border of *„Arafat*, the distance depends on where your camp is situated. This could be anything from 1 to 3 km away.

On the day of *„Arafat*, the 9th day of *Dhul Hijjah*, the walk would be from Mina, through Muzdalifah to *„Arafat* and to your camp in the morning and back to Muzdalifah in the evening, a total of about 20 km. You have to be physically fit to do this without compromising your health.

On the 10th of *Dhul Hijjah*, the walk would be from Muzdalifah to Mina, about 3 km away, following a night with minimum of sleep. Then one has to perform *Tawaful Ziyarat* in Makkah. Walking to Makkah would be a further 3 km followed by *Tawaf*, approximately 10 km of walking. Because of the crowds and human traffic, buses and taxis are unable to come anywhere near the camp sites in Mina. You have to walk.

Visiting the historical sites and the *Hajj* sites, there is also a fair amount of walking and climbing to be done.

Now we can understand why we need to be physically fit.

What type of exercises are necessary?

If you are physically fit or jogging or involved in vigorous sport regularly, you should have no problems. You should maintain your level of fitness whilst in the Saudi Arabia.

For those who lead a sedentary lifestyle (desk job or a driving job), exercise is crucial. Walking is the best exercise. Start slow and build up speed and distance until you can walk briskly, between 5 to 10 km at a time 3 to 4 times a week. Include some hills in your walk or use elevation on your treadmill. Stretching and toning of muscles of the upper and lower body will also help greatly. This fitness also needs to be maintained whilst in Saudi Arabia.

These exercises are necessary for the elderly as well, though not to the same level. They should aim to walk about 5 km at a slower pace at one time, 3 to 4 times a week.

The advantage of walking throughout *Hajj* is that everybody is walking in the same direction. You will not be bumping into people as you would if there was criss-crossing of people or people walking in the opposite direction.

If you are overweight...

For those who are overweight, it is very important to lose as much weight as possible before departure. Being overweight may result in tiredness, aching legs and body, complications like deep vein thrombosis and a greater risk if infections follow. You should make a determined effort to shed as much weight as possible. Even losing 5 to 10 kg of weight can make a difference. Ideally, you should aim for your goal weight according to your height with a Body Mass Index of not greater than 25.

What about my footwear?

Footwear is very important. The best footwear for walking has to have a 1 and half to 2 cm heel, it must have an instep support, it must be broad-fitting and soft. Runners or “tackies” are the best. If it is a sandal, it should also have an ankle strap.



Heel, Ankle Strap, Arch support



Flat, No Support, No Ankle Strap



Heel, Soft, Broad-fitting, Instep Support



Flat, No Support, Narrow front.

If you are flat-footed or if you have dropped arches, it is very important to use footwear that is 1 to 2 cm higher at the heel than the front. If you are not sure, it is worth visiting a podiatrist to ascertain your special requirements.

Whilst exercising, use the footwear you are going to wear in *‘Thram* so that you can break them in. They need to be comfortable. Please do not go with new shoes or buy new shoes there. You may not get your correct size and comfort. You really do not want to end up with blisters whilst performing *‘Umrah* and *Hajj*. It will compromise your *‘Ibadah* and of those around you. You should go with well worn, comfortable shoes that will not damage your feet. Blisters on your feet on the day of Arafat after walking from Mina would definitely compromise your *‘Ibadah*.

Ill-fitting shoes cause foot, ankle, knee, hip and back pains.

What if I am disabled?

Wheel chairs are readily available around the *Haramain*. They are given for use free of charge. If you use a walking aid, you should exercise with your walking aid, so that you are able to walk comfortably over long distances. If you are wheel-chair bound, you need to sit comfortably as upright as possible. The person who is going to push you needs to learn how to use the wheel chair, making sure that brakes are applied every time you stop for any length of time, especially on an incline. The manoeuvring of the wheel chair does require some skill, otherwise you are going to knock into the heels of people in front of you, causing injury to ankles, sometimes quite seriously. The person who is going to push the wheel chair needs to be fit as well. Whilst exercising, walking with the wheel chair for up to 5km at a time would be ideal. A tall person needs to bend to grip the handles of the wheel chair. This bending can cause a back strain in the person pushing. Ideally, the person pushing should be of average height so that it does not become necessary for them to bend.

Sun Burn

Men are not allowed to cover their heads during Hajj and *‘Umrah*. Furthermore, in the case of *Hajj*, men may have shaven their heads recently from the performance of

Umrah. It would therefore be advisable to expose the head to the sun whilst exercising before departure so that the head (scalp and face) and neck can become accustomed to the sun. This can also be done in Saudi Arabia before *Hajj* starts. An umbrella may be used during *Hajj*, to shield from the sun, otherwise sun burn may occur.

Consequences of not being physically fit

Low energy levels, aches and pains, especially knees due to extra walking and *salawat* and exhaustion can all be symptoms of being physically unfit.

2. Attention to Chronic Illnesses

Those suffering from chronic illnesses like Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, Gout, Asthma, Arthritis, Lichen Planus, Eczema, Psoriasis, Glaucoma, etc. must make sure that their illness is well controlled before departure. If you go for *Hajj* with your chronic conditions uncontrolled, you will not be in peak condition to take advantage of the opportunity. You may also compromise the *Hajj* of other people around you whether they are family members or not.

It is very important to visit your Doctor at least 3 months before your departure to check your body and to make sure that all your illnesses are under control. You will have 3 months to get the chronic illnesses under control, if necessary. If you do not have this amount of time at your disposal, please visit your Doctor at any time to discuss your health issues.

In amongst the people that are going with you, appoint a “**Buddy**”.

The Buddy

This is a person who knows all about your health issues, your medication, what to do in an emergency, whom to contact, where your personal papers are kept including your Will and any other information which will help people to make a decision in the event of a tragedy or severe illness.

Diabetes

For diabetics, it is absolutely necessary to visit their doctor at least 3 months before departure. That would give their doctor time to get the diabetes under control, if that is necessary. The best test to do to determine diabetic control is an HBA1C or glycated haemoglobin measurement. The spot check of glucose with a glucose monitor will give the level of glucose in the blood AT THAT TIME. Glucose continuously fluctuates in the blood stream through the day and night. The HBA1C measurement gives us a 2 to 3 month average glucose reading, averaging the peaks and the troughs. This is a far superior test to do for proper control. The HBA1C in a non-diabetic should be below 6%. This is a figure for non-insulin dependant diabetics to strive for as well. However, a figure of between 6% and 6.5% would indicate good control. In Insulin dependant diabetics, the danger of hypoglycaemia increases if they aim to get their HBA1C to below 6%. A figure between 6% and 7% is acceptable for

Insulin dependant diabetics. You have to give yourself and your Doctor at least 2 chances before you depart, to get the diabetes under control.

Once the diabetes is under control, it should be maintained as such with correct eating and medication taken on time.

A well-balanced diet with absent or small amounts of refined carbohydrates such as sugar-containing foods, white flour, white rice, dried fruit and fruit juices, and fruit such as ripe mangoes, grapes, liches, watermelon, red apples, bananas and pineapples. These fruit can be taken in moderation with a meal.

The temptation to drink sugar-rich drinks and fruit juices in abundance and to eat forbidden foods can throw diabetes control completely off.

Symptoms of uncontrolled diabetes include dry mouth, frequent urination, weakness, tiredness, lethargy, blurred vision, increased incidence of clotting and exposure to opportunistic infections. This can compromise Ibadah very badly.

Coma can result in extreme cases.

Those Diabetics on tablets should make sure that they take their medication on time and correctly, e.g., *Metformin* or *Glucophage* must be taken after a meal and *Sulphonylureas* like *Daonil*, *Glycomin*, *Diamicon*, *Diagluclide*, *Amaryl*, *Norvonorm*, etc. must be taken about 15 minutes before a meal.

Those Type 2 and all Type 1 Diabetics on Insulin must make sure that they take the correct dosage. Insulin pensets must be kept in a fridge. They must never be frozen as freezing changes their composition. They can be kept outside of the fridge in temperature controlled areas where the temperature does not exceed 30 degrees C. In Saudi Arabia, where the outside temperatures are usually in the 40s and 50 degrees C, care must be taken to ensure that the Insulin is kept in a suitable place. Insulin must not be put into the luggage which is checked in. This luggage will be put into the luggage hold of the aircraft. Temperatures in the hold can drop to minus 50 degrees C during the flight. These are freezing temperatures and can affect the Insulin. Carry it in your hand luggage.

During the 5 days of *Hajj*, it is important to keep the Insulin in a cool place or in a fridge or in a cooler bag with a cold pack. Arrangements need to be made with your agent to cater for this.

Diabetics are prone to infections including fungal infections. You must ensure that you are infection-free before departure. Don't leave this for the last moment as your Health Care Professional will need some time to bring the infection under control.

Take enough medication with you to last you for the entire trip. Add another week's supply in case your flight is delayed. You may not get the same type of medication there, especially the insulin.

Do not share your medication with others and do not take medication from others unless approved by a Doctor.

Foot care for Diabetics is very important. Fluctuating blood glucose levels in Diabetics may lead to damage to sensory nerves in the foot. This results in numbness and loss of sensation. Foot injuries are common in Diabetics without them realising that they have injured their foot. Sores may form under the foot. Sores and infections of the foot can lead to gangrene and amputations. The Diabetic foot needs to be examined regularly for signs of injury and infection. Footwear for the Diabetics needs to be soft and broad fitting, preferably with a 1 to 1 and a half cm. heel. There must be no areas of friction. Infections must be treated promptly. Feel the inside of the footwear for any ridges or creases. These can also cause injury with prolonged walking

In-growing toe nails with or without infection, need to be treated by a professional. Clipping of toe nails, especially thick nails, must be done by a Podiatrist before departure.

In the crowded conditions during *Hajj*, a space must be kept in front of the person to prevent trampling of feet.

Blood glucose monitoring with test strips must be done frequently before departure and must be continued in Saudi Arabia and throughout the *Hajj* period. Enough glucose test strips need to be taken as you may not get the type of strip you need for your machine. Don't rely on getting your test strips there.

Low dose aspirin (*Ecotrin, Bayer Cardio, Disprin CV* or half a *Disprin*) should be taken by all Diabetics who are over 40 years old. Some clotting factors are increased in Diabetics and this leads to increased coagulability.

Hypertension or High Blood Pressure:

Those who have Hypertension must make sure that their blood pressure is well controlled before departure. **Extremely high blood pressure can lead to strokes, heart failure and cardiac arrest.** Their medication needs to be taken on time throughout their stay. They must not share their medication with others. Those on fluid tablets should take their tablets at an appropriate time so that they do not need to empty their bladders at inappropriate times. This should be discussed with their Doctor before departure.

They should take enough tablets to last for the entire trip with an extra week's supply in case their return flight is delayed. The same brand of medication may not be available in Saudi Arabia. A well-balanced, low salt diet should be continued.



Blood pressure needs to be monitored at least once a week, more frequently if symptoms of headache, dizziness, palpitations, and shortness of breath are experienced.

Gout

Gout is due to a raised blood uric acid level causing precipitation of uric acid crystals in joints and tendons. Gout is controlled by using medication which decreases the production of uric acid in the body, resulting in a lower blood uric acid level. This preventative medication (*Allopurinol* 300mg daily) must be continued through the *Hajj* period. If this medication is stopped, **gout may present itself in the form of a very painful, swollen, hot joint, very tender to touch.** The commonest joint to be affected is the joint between the big toe and the foot (1st Metatarso-phalangeal joint). An attack of gout can result in the person becoming bed-ridden for a few days in severe pain, missing out on *'Ibadah*. If this happens a day or two before *Hajj* or during *Hajj*, it can cause great inconvenience to the person as well as to people around them.

Do not stop preventative treatment.

Sometimes, even though a person is on preventative treatment, an attack of gout can occur. This may be due to an increase ingestion of *purine*-rich foods which increase the production of uric acid. *Purine*-rich foods are found in red meat, turkey, veal, anchovies, sardines, etc. For this reason, people who suffer from gout should take a course of medication from their Doctor to abort an attack of gout. This includes



colchicine 0.5mg tablets to be taken 2-3 times a day, an anti-inflammatory agent and analgesics for the pain. During an attack of gout, the preventative medication (*Allopurinol* or *Puricos*) needs to be stopped until all signs of the attack of gout are gone. Then the preventative medication may be resumed.

Asthma

Asthma can be controlled most effectively using inhaled steroid. The combination of the “controller” steroid inhaler (*Beclate*, *Budaflam*, *Flixotide*, *Pulmicort*, *Inflammide*, etc.) and the “reliever” inhaler (*Ventolin*, *Venteze*, *Asthavent*, *Berotec*, etc.) can prevent an asthma attack. There are combination “controller” and “reliever” inhalers also available (*Symbicort*, *Seretide*, *Foxair*, etc.). These are very effective in controlling even the most stubborn asthma. These preventative medications need to be continued diligently throughout your stay in the holy land. House dust mite allergy is the commonest allergic trigger factor for asthma. House dust mites thrive in bedding and mattresses, especially woollen blankets. Asthma sufferers should not use woollen blankets.

Uncontrolled asthma presents as wheezing frequently, tightness of chest, difficulty breathing, cold sweats, cyanosis, dizziness, weakness.

There is an intimate relationship between allergic rhinitis and asthma. If allergic rhinitis is present, this needs to be treated together with the asthma.

Those with “brittle” asthma, when attacks are severe and occur suddenly without warning must carry a course of prednisone with them prescribed by their Doctor. The usual dose is 30mg daily for 7 days. However, the dosage and duration can change depending on the extent of the asthma. Be guided by your Doctor. Taking the prednisone as soon as an attack occurs can be life saving, as medical care may not always be readily available. Generally, asthma attacks occur at night when medical help may not be available. Having the prednisone in your possession is reassuring also in that you are able to treat an attack if it occurs.

People who suffer from asthma should avoid drinking cold juices and water, as cold may precipitate an attack.



In crowded conditions, it is difficult to avoid coming into contact with people who are coughing and sneezing from an upper respiratory infection especially during *salah*. As far as possible, people with asthma should isolate themselves from anyone displaying signs of an upper respiratory infection.

It is strongly recommended that people with asthma take an Influenza vaccine and a Group A and B streptococcal vaccine before departure. Streptococcal infections are common in crowded conditions.

Arthritis

Arthritis can be classified into two broad categories, viz., Osteo-arthritis or degenerative arthritis and Inflammatory Arthritis.

Osteo-arthritis or degenerative arthritis, as the name implies, occurs as a result of wear and tear on joints. There are two common varieties, one an inherited form affecting the distal joints of the fingers, spine (cervical, dorsal and lumbar), hips, knees, ankles, etc. The second is due to overload of joints caused either by overweight or sporting injuries. The osteoarthritis caused by overweight usually affects weight-bearing joints like the ankles, knees, hips, and lumbar spine.

Inflammatory arthritis is caused by conditions such as Rheumatoid Arthritis, SLE or lupus, Psoriatic arthritis, etc.

Treatment for osteoarthritis revolves around weight loss to reduce the load, anti-inflammatory agents, physiotherapy and analgesics.

Inflammatory Arthritis needs to be controlled. There is unfortunately no cure for this type of arthritis. Disease modifying drugs are used such as *Salazopyrin* or *Methotrexate*, gold, anti-malarial agents, etc. to control the condition. It is important to get the disease under control before departure. These disease modifying drugs must be continued in the correct dosage and taken on time throughout your stay in Saudi Arabia. You must also take with you anti-inflammatory agents that work for you together with some analgesics. Remember that codeine-containing analgesics are not available in Saudi Arabia.

If you are over weight, whether you have osteoarthritis or inflammatory arthritis, losing weight before departure will help you significantly. Even losing 5 to 10kg of weight will make a great impression.

Uncontrolled arthritis presents as a painful, swollen, hot joint or joints.

Dry Skin Conditions (e.g., Lichen Planus, Eczema, Psoriasis)

All dry skin conditions need to be brought under control before departure and maintained whilst in Saudi Arabia. The maintenance must be more vigorous just before performing *Umrah* or *Hajj*. Whilst in Ihram, we are not allowed to scratch our bodies. This presents a serious problem for people suffering from dry skin conditions. Preventative treatment ensures that the condition remains controlled and very little itching if any occurs during *Umrah* and *Hajj*. Suitable moisturisers need to be continuously applied 2 to 3 time a day, as the dry conditions in Saudi Arabia adds to the problem. Moisturisers containing 5% to 10% urea work very well for use on the

body (not the face). *Epimax*, *SBR Lipocream*, *Physiogel* are all good moisturisers to use for sensitive skin.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a condition where the pressure in the eyes is increased, resulting in damage to the optic nerve. Untreated glaucoma can lead to blindness. The eye drops prescribed should be diligently applied regularly and on time without interruption no matter where you are. Keep the eye drops in a cool place, as high temperatures may make the eye drops ineffective. Take an extra supply of the eye drops, as you may lose your drops in the rush of things whilst travelling or you may not be able to get your brand of eye drops in Saudi Arabia. The extra eye drops should be kept in a different bag. Do not place the eye drops in your checked-in luggage as the freezing temperatures (up to -50 degrees C) in the hold of the plane, may make your drops ineffective.

These procedures for the care of eye drops apply to any other eye drops you may be using.

3. Dental Care

Dentists are very difficult to find in Saudi Arabia whilst on pilgrimage. It is important to have a thorough dental check at least 3 months before departure in case dental work needs to be done. Gum problems also present a serious problem especially in Diabetics. Gum infection can occur. This is very painful.

Dentures need to be checked for proper fitting as well as for any ridges or protrusions that may result in mouth ulcers.

Become familiar with the use of a *Miswaak*. Use it regularly through the day correctly. Incorrect use may lead to gum damage. Using a *Miswaak* is a *sunnah* of *Rasulullah SAW* that needs to be revived around the world.

4. Back Problems

Whether you suffer from a previous slipped disk, arthritis of the spine, or recurrent strains, it is very important to become pain free before departure. Treat your back vigorously using all modes of treatment (rest, exercise, physiotherapy, chiropractic treatment, anti-inflammatory agents, acupuncture, etc.). Back strains can take weeks to resolve. Knowing that you do have a back that may play up during your journey, it is important for you not to lift, push or pull anything heavy just before departure and also throughout your journey. Poor posture impacts negatively on your back.

Therefore, sit on a chair that is high, sit upright at all times, do not slouch and do not sit on a low chair.



Sitting on the floor in the *Haramain* for long periods of time may present a challenge, especially if you are not accustomed to sitting on the floor for long periods. However, using a correct upright posture, you may be able to lean on pillars with your legs

outstretched. Change position frequently, making sure that your back is in an upright position.

You should take some anti-inflammatory agents that work for you together with some analgesics.

Those who suffer back problems from sitting for long periods on the floor of the *Haramain*, reciting the *Qur'an* or remembering Allah *SWT*, will benefit greatly from back stretching exercises done immediately on getting up from the sitting position. If you are not accustomed to sitting on the floor for long periods, learn some back stretching exercises from a physiotherapist or a biokineticist in your area.

If it were necessary to buy new luggage, then it would be better to spend a little more and acquire bags with wheels. These can be pulled along without being carried.

Prevention of back injury is crucial, otherwise a trivial back injury may compromise your stay in Saudi Arabia and, of course, your *'Ibadah*.

5. Incontinence and *Hajj* and *Umrah*

Incontinence is the passing of small to large amounts of urine without any control. It is mainly found in women. Stress Incontinence, by far the commonest type, usually occurs when the bladder “drops” towards the vagina, increasing the angle between the bladder and the urethra. The sphincter-like action of this angle is lost and incontinence occurs. Small amounts of urine come out with coughing, sneezing, straining or getting up from *sajdah*. A neurogenic bladder and an irritable bladder are also other causes of incontinence.

Treatment is available for incontinence. Please consult a urologist who will perform some tests to determine which type of incontinence you have. Treatment then becomes easier. Treatment may range from using tablets to having a sling operation to lift the bladder. Consultation with a urologist must be done at least 4 to 6 months before departure in case an operation is necessary.

6. Menses and *Hajj* and *Umrah*

The inconvenience of having menses whilst performing *Umrah* or *Hajj*, is a daunting thought that most women have when undertaking this journey. It need not be so as help is available.

Whilst a woman is menstruating, she is unable to perform salah, recite the *Qur'an* or engage in *Tawaf* in the *Haramain*. She may engage in *zikrullah*. Although she is unable to do these *Umrah*, Allah *SWT* still rewards her for it as if she performed them. *Subhanallah*. Therefore, it is okay for a woman to have menses during her state in the holy land, as long as it falls outside of *Hajj* or *Umrah*. However, she may wish to postpone her menses if they coincide with her performing *Umrah* or *Hajj*, especially the latter, as there may be time constraints with return air travel after *Hajj* is over.

Different categories of women.

- i) Those women who have a regular cycle and can predict the next one within a day or two should work out the time of their menses during their stay in the holy land. If their normal time of menses falls at a convenient time for them to have a period, they should not interfere with the menses. If their menses falls

at a time which would interfere with „*Umrah* or *Hajj*, then it can be postponed for a later time.

- ii) Those women who have irregular cycles, where it becomes impossible to work out when the menses will appear, should regulate their cycle before they depart, using combined oral contraceptive tablets.
- iii) Those women who miss periods due to a variety of situations like perimenopause or polycystic ovarian syndrome, may also feel uncertain whether their menses will come or not and when. They can also use the combined oral contraceptive pill.

How to postpone menses.

This should be done in consultation with your Doctor.

- i) Combined Oral Contraceptive Pills can be used to postpone periods. The biphasic combined oral contraceptive pills are the best to use. These can be identified easily as they have only 2 coloured tablets in the pack, the active tablets with hormones and the inactive tablets without hormones. The active tablets should be continued from one packet into another pack to extend the non-bleeding days when bleeding is not desirable. A period should not be delayed for more than 2 weeks, as break-through bleeding can occur. This bleeding can sometimes be very heavy.
In some women, the pill may cause some unpleasant side effects like mood changes, break-through bleeding, painful breasts and headaches. Most of these side effects last for about 3 months. If a woman has taken the contraceptive pill previously and had no side effects, the chances are high that she would tolerate the pill better. This same pill should be used. In any event, it would be better to start the contraceptive pill at least 3 months before departure so that the side effects would not cause a problem.
In my experience, a biphasic combined contraceptive pill with low dose *Ethinylloestradiol* (30microgms) and enough progesterone (150 microgms *Levonorgestral*) to keep the menses away, usually work very well.
- ii) You may use a pure progesterone tablet which contains 5mg of *Norethisterone* (Primolut N) in each pill. Taking one tablet 3 times a day starting at least 4 to 5 days before the expected period, can postpone a period for as long as you are taking them. When it is convenient for you to have your period, stop the tablets and your period should come in the next 2 to 3 days. This is the best way to postpone a period providing the period is due just before or during *Hajj*. It should not be used to delay menses for more than 14 days. The possibility of break-through bleeding increases.
- iii) In case of sudden unexpected bleeding a day or two before '*Umrah* or *Hajj*, *Cyklokapron* (*Tranexamic Acid*) in a dose of 2 tablets 3 to 4 times a day may be used to stop the bleeding in a short time. This must be done in consultation with a Doctor.

Every woman's cycle is different. For this reason, it is important to individualise treatment. What may suit one woman may not suit another.

There are contra-indications to taking the oral contraceptive pill. These should be borne in mind. The more important ones are cigarette smoking, large varicose veins, a history of thrombosis in the superficial or deep veins with or without embolism,

liver abnormalities, known or suspected oestrogen-dependant cancer, severe migraine and cerebro-vascular insufficiency.

7. Immunisations

Yellow Fever: All travellers from designated countries at risk of Yellow Fever, need to have a valid Yellow Fever Vaccination Certificate showing that they were vaccinated at least 10 days previously and not more than 10 years before entry into Saudi Arabia. The following countries (as defined by The International Travel and Health, WHO, Geneva, 2011) are at risk of Yellow Fever: Sub-Saharan Africa and South America. For a full list, visit <http://www.int/ith/en/> (assessed Sept. 2011).

Those coming into Saudi Arabia without a valid certificate will be vaccinated and put under surveillance for 6 days.

Meningococcal Meningitis: All Visitors from all over the world coming for '*Umrah* or *Hajj* or for seasonal work are required to produce a valid certificate of vaccination with the quadrivalent polysaccharide (ACYW135) vaccine against meningitis, issued not more than 3 years previously and not less than 10 days from date of entry into Saudi Arabia for ALL adults and children above 2 years old.

Besides the meningococcal vaccine, chemoprophylaxis will be administered at port of entry to all arrivals from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea-Bassau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan, both north and south. Ciprofloxacin 500mg is given to all adults from these countries at port of entry. Children will receive Rifampicin and pregnant women will receive Ceftriaxone injections.

All internal pilgrims, residents and *Hajj* workers of Makkah and Madinah will receive the Meningococcal Vaccine, if they have not received the vaccine in the past 3 years.

Polio Vaccine: All travellers arriving from polio-endemic countries and re-established transmission countries and countries with imported cases of polio, will require to be given Oral Poliovirus Vaccine (OPV) at least 6 weeks prior to application of entry visa. Irrespective of immunisation status, all travellers from these countries will receive 1 dose of OPV at border posts.

Polio-endemic and re-established transmission countries include Afghanistan, Angola, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sudan, both north and south. Imported cases have been registered during the past 12 months in Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Kazakhstan, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Nepal, Niger, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uganda.

Seasonal Influenza Vaccine: The Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia recommends that all international pilgrims be vaccinated against seasonal Influenza before arrival into Saudi Arabia with WHO approved latest Influenza Vaccines, especially those with pre-existing conditions like the elderly (over 65 years), people with neurological or metabolic diseases, chronic respiratory or heart diseases, liver or renal disease, diabetes, obesity, immunodeficiency caused by HIV or cancer treatment and pregnant women.

In Saudi Arabia, the vaccine is recommended for all internal pilgrims, especially those with the above conditions and all health staff working in the *Hajj* premises.

Hepatitis A Vaccine: Recommended if food is going to be purchased from unreliable or unhygienic and unregistered outlets.

A Streptococcal A and B vaccines: Recommended for people who have pre-existing conditions like the elderly (over 65 years), people with neurological or metabolic diseases, chronic respiratory or heart diseases, liver or renal disease, diabetes, obesity, immunodeficiency caused by HIV, and cancer treatment.

Hepatitis B Vaccine: Recommended for all health care workers.

Other Vaccines: Measles, rubella, mumps, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and polio vaccines for people coming from countries with outbreaks of these diseases.

Above information obtained from World Health Organisation Weekly Epidemiological Record, 23 Sept. 2011. Vol. 39, 2011, 86, 425-436.



8. Fungal Infections

Fungal infections are very common. They occur in areas of the body that are sweaty and moist, where skin comes into contact with skin. They can occur in between toes, under the feet (athletes' feet), around the edges of feet and under the feet as a dry scaly, itchy rash (Moccasin-type), in the groin (Dobie's itch), under breasts, in arm pits, on the scalp (Tinea Corporis), on the trunk (Tinea Tersicolor), on limbs and faces ("Ring Worm"), in the vagina (Vaginal Thrush), in the mouth (Oral Thrush), etc.

The hallmark symptom of fungal infections is an itchy rash. Fungal infections can be cured completely. If you have such a rash, it may bother you whilst you are in *Jharaam* when scratching of the skin is not permitted. Visit your Doctor and cure this nuisance as soon as possible. You may use an antifungal cream. The cream must be used for long enough to cure the infection.

We can shed the fungus onto the floor and carpets, especially if we scratch the rash, leaving behind some of the dead skin. Others walking over this can pick up the fungus on their feet. Therefore, I would recommend the use of socks in the *Haramain*, for your own protection and the protection of others. Please make sure that these socks do not slip on the marble floor.

9. Medicines to take with you.

Most medicines are available in Saudi Arabia. In most cases, original products are available rather than the generics that most people may be familiar with. The originals cost more. Hence the high prices of medicines in Saudi Arabia. You do not need a prescription to get the medicines. The pharmacist uses his discretion and supplies the medicines on request. It is always better for you to take your own medicines with you in properly labelled containers with your name on it if possible. The brand of medicine you are taking may not be available there.

Medicines you use daily.

All your chronic medication must be put into individual containers, preferably in their own packaging, with your name on the label. Customs officials would not bother you if you do this. Tablets and capsules must not be carried loose, with many different tablets in the same packet, unlabelled.

Keep some money in reserve just in case you need to purchase some of your chronic medicines because they were misplaced or damaged.

It would be a great help to Health Care Professionals if you carried a letter from your Doctor specifying your illnesses, the chronic medicines you are on and the dosage.

A copy of this letter should be carried on you at all times with your hotel card, in case you collapse or feel ill.

Your chronic medicines are for you only and must never be given to others, no matter how good your intentions are.

Other medicines you may need.

The following medicines you may share with your fellow travellers, as long as they are not allergic to the:

Maxolon (Contromet) or Valoid (Nauzene) for nausea and vomiting.

Buscopan (Scopex) either plain or the compound for abdominal cramps of a short duration only. If the pain persists, consult a Doctor.

Analgesics of your choice. Codeine-containing analgesics are not available in Saudi Arabia. You have to take your own.

Lomotil or Imodium (Prodiium) for diarrhoea more than 6 times a day.

Actifed or Flutex for a runny nose.

Cetirizine or Loratadine if you suffer allergies.

*A course of antibiotics from your Doctor. I would recommend either *Augmentin* 1000mg SR or it's generic or a second generation *Cephalosporin* like *Orelox* or a *Quinolone* like *Tavanic* or *Avelon (Moxibay)*, etc. Antibiotics must not be used at the outset of an infection unless advised by a Doctor. Most infections are caused by viruses and do not need antibiotics. Antibiotics may be necessary for a secondary infection like sinusitis, ear infection, chest infection, etc.*

Do not carry liquid medicines.

During Your Journey

Venous Thrombosis

Also called "The Economy Class Syndrome" due to the cramped seating in economy class, especially after the advent of cheap flights.

The possibility of venous thrombosis and embolism occurring on a long flight is real, especially in certain high risk individuals. High risk individuals are smokers, diabetics, people with varicose veins, people with a previous history of thrombosis anywhere in the body, overweight and obesity, dehydration, and certain blood disorders.

To minimise the formation of clots in the legs, the commonest site, flight stockings or varicose vein stockings need to be worn during the flight.

Blood from the lower limbs comes back to the heart with the help of the contraction and relaxation of lower limb muscles. This is not possible when sitting for long periods in a cramped position.

Other measures include sitting in an aisle seat and walking frequently, i.e., every half to one hour, if possible, as long as it does not disrupt the functions of the cabin crew. Foot exercises during the flight also help. These include pressing the toes against a resistance, like the foot rest and releasing; extending the foot and relaxing; turning the foot clockwise and anti-clockwise; stretching the whole lower limb; standing on toes and then on heels. The idea is to contract the lower limb muscles whilst in a sitting position without annoying fellow passengers.

The more physically fit you are, the less the chances of developing venous thrombosis. Exercise helps to produce anti-clotting factors in the blood, preventing clotting.

*Aspirin prevents **arterial** clotting. It has no effect on **venous** clotting. Therefore, airlines are not recommending the use of aspirin routinely.*

Hydration

Hydration during the flight is very important as even mild dehydration can expose one to a variety of problems, including venous thrombosis. Drink plenty of fluids during the flight. If you do not want to be a nuisance, ask the cabin attendants for extra water when they are out with their drinks trolley and save this for later. If you run out, don't be shy to ask for more water. It is so important to be well hydrated during the flight.

Neck Strain

Neck strain can occur from the abnormal posture of sleeping whilst upright in an aircraft seat. In most cases, this is transient. With a few stretches of the neck, it should settle.

It presents a real problem in people suffering from cervical spondylosis. In this condition, arthritis of the vertebrae in the neck result in osteophytes or bone growths and protrusions on the vertebrae, causing stiffness of the neck with a decreased range of movements, neck muscle spasms and pain radiating to the shoulder/s or arm/s down to the fingers. Nerves can become compressed ("pinched") or irritated by the inflammation. In people who suffer from cervical spondylosis, care must be taken of neck posture during the flight. A neck support in the form of a soft cervical collar or an inflatable neck support must be used to keep the neck straight during the flight. Sleeping on the flight with the neck in a highly flexed position or laterally flexed, may precipitate an attack of pain and discomfort which can last a few weeks.

Performing *Salah* on the aircraft

Those who prefer to perform their salah on the plane or who wish to recite the *Qur'an* on the long flight, should consider using leather socks like the mozzas or the newer Seal Skin, waterproof, breathable, close fitting socks on which they can make *mass'a* when performing *wudhu*. Besides the inconvenience of washing your feet during *wudhu* in the aircraft toilet, you will have to be a contortionist to accomplish this manoeuvre. Many people have strained their back trying to achieve this feat.

During your Stay in Saudi Arabia

Health problems may arise on your arrival in Saudi Arabia.

Swelling of Feet

Due to the long flight from distant countries, swelling of feet and legs up to the knees, may occur. This is more apparent in people who have poor venous circulation, as in varicose veins or in overweight individuals.

The weather in Saudi Arabia is very hot and dry. It can become humid in Makkah in summer. Summer day temperatures range from 40 to 55 degrees C and more. Winter day temperatures are milder in the region of 30 to 40 degrees C. These temperatures are higher than what most people experience in their country. Because of the heat, vaso-dilatation occurs in the peripheral circulation. Because of gravity and the leaking

of fluid from the veins, swelling of the feet and legs can occur until acclimatisation occurs within a week. The swelling then goes away.

Feet elevation alternating with walking usually sorts the problem. Shoes may be difficult to put on after the flight due to the swelling.

Those with Heart Disease, High Blood Pressure, Diabetes and other serious illnesses should consult a Doctor in case the swelling is due to cardiac or renal problems.

Skin Rashes and Dryness of Skin

Due to the high temperatures, a heat rash may appear on people who have a sensitive skin and those who have eczema. This rash is usually present on the outer and anterior surfaces of legs and thighs, on the abdomen and in the back over the hips above the buttocks. It may also appear on the outer aspect of the arm and forearm. It is intensely itchy, with reddish swellings as if bitten by some insect. The rash needs soothing with calamine lotion. A steroid cream also helps to stop the itching and reduce the swelling. Once acclimatisation takes place in 4 to 10 days, the rash usually goes away. It is a nuisance.



The harsh weather conditions cause dryness of the skin, especially in people who come from humid climates. Their skin is not accustomed to this dryness. The dryness can be most prominent on the outside of the legs near the ankles, outside of the thighs and hips, on the back across the lower back, on the outer aspect of the arms and forearms. The heels become dry and can crack. (See below under “Cracked Heels”) The whole body and in particular, the latter areas need to be moisturised 2 or 3 times a day.

Hydration

Drinking Water

Tap water is not safe to drink anywhere in Saudi Arabia. It is brackish water obtained from bore holes and brought to the hotels in tankers. Water is stored in huge tanks on the top of hotels. We can make *wudhu* with it but gargling may cause a sore throat.



Drinking water has to be bought in the form of bottled water. However, *Zam Zam* is available freely in Makkah and in Madinah. You don't have to drink bottled water. Because of the hot weather conditions, it becomes necessary to drink water in abundance. Less urine is passed due to the hot conditions. The body conserves water by concentrating the urine. It is not good to pass very concentrated urine for a variety of reasons. Drink enough water so that the urine is clear. Passing clear urine indicates good hydration.

The very hot and dry conditions can result in dehydration if adequate amounts of liquids are not consumed. As a general rule, one should have *at least* 3 litres of liquids a day. To be more accurate, you may divide your weight in kilograms by 10. That should give you the number of 250mls glasses of liquid to have for the day. To this number, we need to add another 4 X 250mls glasses because of the unusual heat and dryness. Taking a 60kg person, they will require $6 + 4 = 10$ X 250mls glasses of liquids a day. Most of this should be water. However, fruit juices, soups and herbal teas can be included in the count. Normal tea contains tannic acid which has diuretic properties. More urine will be excreted after drinking a cup of normal tea. It should not be added to these numbers. Fruit juices are also plentiful.

A good way to remember to drink enough for the day is to get into a habit throughout your stay, of drinking 2 full cups of *Zam Zam* with each salah performed. That would give you 10 cups a day. These are 200ml cups.

Dehydration can make you feel dizzy, weak, listless, lethargic and drowsy.

Heat Exhaustion

Our body temperature varies between 36 to 37 degrees C. With outside temperatures in the mid 40s and 50s, our body temperature can rise, causing heat exhaustion. Heat exhaustion causes, dizziness, disorientation, hallucinations and loss of consciousness. It can result in a stroke (Heat Stroke), when clots appear in the blood vessels of the brain, causing a stroke. A stroke has long term consequences as it can result in paralysis of part of the body.

Heat exhaustion is more likely to happen if dehydration is present. Drink plenty of liquids to keep well hydrated.

Avoid long exposure in the heat and sun. If this is unavoidable, use an umbrella or head cover, like a scarf. Keep in the shade as much as possible.

If a person amongst you is showing signs of heat exhaustion, cool the person down, using water, ice, a fan, air conditioning, etc. Hydrate the person as fast as possible by asking them to drink copious amounts of water. Keep them in a shaded area.

Heat exhaustion can be prevented.

The Well of *Zam Zam*

The best liquid to drink in Saudi Arabia is *Zam Zam*. The well of *Zam Zam* is a miracle. During *Hajj*, it can produce in excess of 5 million litres of *Zam Zam* a day without showing any signs of drying up. It is amazing. Any *dua* ' made sincerely whilst drinking *Zam Zam* is accepted providing what you ask for is good for you. Most people bring *Zam Zam* back with them on their return home. It is a good idea to purchase the container that you are going to bring back home when you arrive there and fill it for use in the room during your stay. It is not necessary to drink bottled water. You can make tea with the *Zam Zam* as well.

In the *Haramain*, there are groups of *Zam Zam* containers with cups on either side. You are supposed to take the clean cup from *your* right side (the cups are placed upside down), drink *Zam Zam* and place the used cup in the container on *your* left (right way up). Some people become confused by this. They take cups from the left side and leave the used cup upside down on the right side. There are arrows on the area of the *Zam Zam* containers containing the cups, indicating where you need to take the cups from and where you need to leave them after use. Infections can spread in this way. Please make sure that the cup you are using is from the upside down cups

on the right and is dry on the inside. You may also take a cup from the middle of the pile on your right side.

These groups of *Zam Zam* containers in the *Haramain* are usually 5 or 6 in number. Four or five of them would contain cold *Zam Zam* and one or two would contain room temperature *Zam Zam*. The cold *Zam Zam* can cause a sore throat from irritation of the throat. It is preferable to drink room temperature *Zam Zam*, although this may be quite warm. You may mix some cold with some warm *Zam Zam*.



Zam Zam is available inside and outside in both *Haramain*. Taps are available outside to fill *Zam Zam* into containers. You must intend to saturate yourself with *Zam Zam*.

Food

Most agents provide food for their clients. This food is generally what the clients prefer as “home food”. As long as you eat food from reliable sources, it would be safe. As it gets busier, hygiene is generally compromised in take-away outlets and street vendors. One needs to be cautious. Food poisoning can occur. Sometimes, camel meat is used. This can present a challenge for those with sensitive stomachs. It is always a good idea to ask about the meat. Of course, all meat in Saudi Arabia is *halal*.

Pilgrims are not allowed to bring fresh food into Saudi Arabia. Only properly canned, or sealed food or food stored in containers with easy access for inspection, is allowed in small quantities for personal use only.

Is there a need for Vitamins or energy drinks?

If you are healthy and eat a healthy, well-balanced diet, you should not require any supplements. A well-balanced diet includes carbohydrates, preferably complex carbohydrates, with some nuts, whole grains and seeds, usually taken as cereals, dairy products, fruits and vegetables, and protein in the form of meat, chicken, fish, eggs, lentils, soya, etc., and fats. Try to include olives, avocados, nuts, butter (if you do not have a raised cholesterol problem) rather than animal fats only.

In the elderly, where absorption of vitamins may be compromised or too little food is consumed or in people who are poor or fussy eaters, vitamin supplements may be necessary. In this case, you may use a broad-spectrum multivitamin and mineral supplement, with essential amino acids and fatty acids.

Many people complain that they do not have enough energy and require some supplementation. You will find that in the majority of cases, the lack of energy is due to being physically unfit, being overweight or eating incorrect foods that drain you rather than energise you. Foods that drain you of energy are high fat, greasy, oily, fried foods which require your own energy to digest them and re-organise them in your body after absorption from the bowel.

Food source vitamins are still the best because they have the co-factors that are necessary for absorption, in the food. When choosing a vitamin supplement, make sure that it does not have any *haram* ingredients in them. If we consume *haram* food, our *dua* is not accepted for 40 days. You really do not need that, bearing in mind that you are going on pilgrimage.

Infections

Due to the large crowds, upper respiratory infections are very common. They spread with ease through close contact with people who are sneezing, blowing their noses and coughing. Most people develop an infection. The commonest cause of this infection is the Influenza virus. Symptoms include a high fever, runny nose, cough, body pains, headache and nausea. Initially, you may not need antibiotics. The infection causes a chesty cough. A broncho-dilator cough medicine would help remove the phlegm from the chest. Those who have allergic rhinitis and sinus problems will benefit from using a long-acting anti-histamine, like *cetirizine* (Zyrtec) or *loratadine*.

It is difficult to avoid people who are infected. **Frequent washing of hands** has been found to be the single most effective way of preventing the virus from spreading. Antibiotics may be necessary for secondary infections. Please consult a Doctor in your company or a Doctor at a Health Mission.



Avoid close contact with people who are ill. Visit them by all means but keep your distance. Spend as little time as possible with the ill person. Use a mask if necessary.

If you are ill and are fortunate enough to have a visitor, protect your visitor by staying a fair distance away. Avoid close contact and tell visitors that the illness may be contagious.

People who are ill should try not to mix with people who are well. In this way, the illness can be contained.

If you suffer from any condition which results in **decreased**

immunity, e.g., following chemo-therapy, on steroids, etc., please use a mask. Avoid people who are ill. Avoid crowded conditions. Visit the *Haram* at “quieter” times.

Constipation

Due to a change in the diet and the hot weather resulting in water depletion, constipation can be a real problem. Constipation may result in haemorrhoids and fissures. These may result in bleeding. Constipation, haemorrhoids and fissures can be very distressing. It can affect normal activities resulting in loss of valuable time in Makkah and Madinah.

Maintaining a high fibre diet, e.g., a high fibre breakfast cereal, wholemeal or brown bread, dried fruit like prunes and apricots, fresh fruit and vegetables, drinking adequate amounts of water can prevent constipation.

The Marble Floors.

Marble is used extensively in the *Haramain*, inside and outside. All the marble is laid length-wise in the direction of *Kabah*. The marble becomes slippery when wet or if you are wearing soaks that are not suitable to wear on marble floors. Seal Skin socks, worn over regular socks, form a welcome comfort for walking on the hard marble. It softens the impact. You may even wear two pairs of socks.

Marble is very hard. A fall on marble may result in fractures of the elbow, knees or hips. Be very careful when walking on wet marble.

The marble used is also white and reflects the sun’s rays. Those with sensitive eyes and with cataracts will have a problem with this brightness. Sunglasses should be worn to minimise the glare. Sunglasses are allowed to be worn in *Jhram* during *Hajj* and *Umrah*.

The Tawaf

People who go well before *Hajj* (3 to 6 weeks before) may find the *Haram* in Makkah quieter than usual. They should take advantage of this and perform as many quality *tawafs* as possible. As the time nears towards *Hajj*, the *Haram* becomes very busy and it is not possible to do very many *tawafs*.

The area around the Hajare Aswad becomes very busy, with many people vying with each other to touch and kiss it. Please keep away from this area close to *Hajj*, as injuries can occur. Rib fractures, injuries to ankles and the abdomen can occur. The crowd in this area is usually in a frenzy, and surprisingly, so close to the *Ka’bah*, all patience, good behaviour, gentleness and concern for other brothers and sisters-in-islam that Islam teaches us, are all thrown out of the window. People become very selfish, one of our main weaknesses in life. Keep away from this area when it is busy. Whilst performing *Tawaf*, be careful of wheel chairs behind you. Ankle injuries are common, as the wheel chair scrapes against your delicate ankle causing a painful, deep abrasion. Move away from wheel chairs or follow them. It is safer.



Keep away from the crowded areas during *Tawaf*. Rather go to the outside of the circle where there is more space. Hitting into or walking close to the opposite sex unrelated to you, whilst performing *Tawaf*, should be regarded as a serious violation.

When you are starting your *Tawaf* from the opposite side of *Hajare Aswat*, walk *with* the people as if you are in *Tawaf*

until you come to the starting point, i.e., the *Hajare Aswat*. Do not walk against the crowd. You may get injured and you will be annoying many people who would have to give you way whilst they are in worship in *Tawaf*.

Tawaf can also be performed on the first or second floors. They are very long. The passage created on the first floor is ideal for wheel chairs.

Spectacles

Those who wear glasses should take an extra set with them. The spectacles can get lost or damaged in the crowds. It would be better to have plastic lenses rather than glass. Glass shatters when broken and can cause serious injuries to the eyes. One area where this can happen is when stoning of *Shaitaan* takes place. Some people take wild swings at the wall or aim at the edge of the wall instead of the middle, missing the wall and hitting someone on the other side. This is quite common. A stone hitting your lenses could shatter them and cause injuries.



Optometrists are not easy to find in Makkah or Madinah.

Managing with the Crowds

Crowd control techniques have improved significantly over the years. Many of the rituals are now stream-lined to make it easier for the pilgrims.

There can be anything from 2 to 3 million people in Makkah at the same time just before *Hajj*. Moving in the crowds can become hazardous. Most of the people are well behaved. Some pick-pockets are on the prowl and some gropers are also on the prowl. It is best to avoid crowds and help ease the congestion. If you go early to the *Haram* for *salah*, the crowds are thinner. After the *salah*, if you wait for about 30 minutes reciting *Qur'an*, remembering Allah *SWT* or performing optional *salawat*, the crowd would thin out.

Taking a moment and looking at the movement of the crowd would assist you to determine the path to take to your destination. Go with the flow, not against the flow. The flow of humans may take you slightly off course but that does not matter in the bigger scheme of things. There will also be criss-crossing going on when there is an intersection. Avoid this as much as you can. It's tiring walking in a crowd that is criss-crossing, besides the dangers of stampedes.

Once you have worked out your route, stay in the column of people moving in the direction you wish to go. Try to stay in the middle of this column of people, as people on the edges of the column will get knocked about by people moving in the opposite direction.

Various types of people are in the crowd. Some who suffer claustrophobia may become anxious or may get a panic attack. This is one of the potential causes of a stampede. If you notice someone around you becoming anxious, help them by creating some space around them. Reassure them that everything is okay and that you will help them. Hold them for comfort and reassurance as long as they are the same sex as you.

Shorter people do have a problem in the crowd as they are unable to look around and ahead of them. People not knowing what is going on around them are more likely to

panic, causing a stampede. Give the shorter people around you space, especially women.

There are also people in the crowd who depend on others to guide them and to lead them to their destination. These are usually rural people with very little experience of city life. The fear of separating from their “guide” may also cause anxiety and sometimes, panic attacks. If you see this situation developing in front of you, do all you can to unite the fear-stricken person to the “guide”. They will be ever so grateful to you.

NEVER PUSH. This evil is the cause of many problems in a crowd. Remember, everybody in the crowd is trying to do the same thing, that is, getting to their accommodation or getting into the *Haram*. Become very stern with whoever around you pushes and make as if they have more rights to have a right of way despite injuring people. Relax in the crowd and be patient.

Due to the huge crowds, there are queues everywhere. This is expected. If you are not in a hurry, assist the frail, the weak and the vulnerable in the queue behind you to get them through sooner. Be patient and you will be rewarded.

Escalators present a challenge when everybody is trying to get out of the *Haram* at the same time. As the escalators get filled with people, you have to get out of the way at the bottom of the escalator when you disembark. If you



Crowds outside the *Haram* in Makkah before *Hajj* 1431 (2010)

don't get out of the way, you may find people that are on the escalator and have nowhere to go, tumbling over you. During very busy periods, the escalators are turned off for this reason. Some people just do not move out of the way, not giving the ones coming down a space to disembark.

Emergency vehicles and other essential services come to a standstill as the crowds jostle for room. It is difficult to clear garbage. You may find yourself walking on garbage during the first two days of *Hajj*. The *Hajj*

Authorities do a fantastic job in clearing the garbage as soon as the crowd begins to thin out. They work under very trying conditions.



An ambulance is parked among thousands of pilgrims near the Namira Musjid at „Arafat, southeast of Makkah – 15th Nov. 2010. (Mustafa Ozer/AFP/Getty Images)

Cracked Heels

The hard, dry marble combined with the hot, dry atmosphere results in severe drying of the feet, especially around the heel. This dryness results in callous formation and cracking. It can become painful. The cracks can lead to infections like cellulitis.

Diabetics need to pay particular attention to this.

This happens to everybody. Don't think it will not happen to you. From the moment of your arrival into Makkah or Madinah, you need to apply a moisturiser to your feet, especially around your heels. Heel balms are available. These must be applied several times a day. Together with this, wear a pair of socks that does not slip on the marble. Those who can afford it should purchase Seal Skin socks or leather socks (mozzas). For extra comfort, you can wear another pair of socks under the Seal Socks or Mozza. Prevention is very important. It is difficult to get rid of, once the callous forms. Moisturise frequently.



Friction Burn or Shafing on the Inner Thighs.

In men in ,Ihram, no underwear is worn. Due to no support for the scrotum, the dangling scrotum rubs against the inner thigh whilst walking, causing a friction burn. This presents as a very painful, stinging rash on the scrotum and on the inner thigh. Because it pains with every step, it forces the person to walk like a duck with outstretched legs. This is a preventable condition. Apply copious amounts of Vaseline (white soft paraffin) over the inner thigh and on the scrotum after you have put on your ,Ihram at the start of ,Umrah or Hajj. Vaseline is not perfumed. It can, therefore, be used whilst in ,Ihram. The Vaseline needs to be applied frequently. If you do develop the rash, a steroid cream will fix the rash within a day or two. *Insha Allah.*

In women, a friction burn can also occur on the inner thighs. This is usually due to wearing pants made from material that is coarse and heavy. During walking long distances, this material rubs against the inner thighs causing a friction burn. The symptoms are the same. It is also very painful. The best material for women to use as their ,Ihram is light, soft cotton material. Heavy materials should be avoided because of the hot weather conditions. Cotton material should not cause a friction burn



Shafing on the inner thigh.

Fungal infections in the groin may occur, especially in diabetics. The Shafing on the inner thigh may lead to a fungal infection or cellulitis.

Sleep Deprivation

Most people change their sleeping pattern when they arrive in Saudi Arabia. Due to the commitments of the rituals and *'Ibadah*, it is difficult to get more than 4 hours of sleep at a stretch. Due to the very hot conditions during the day, most people sleep after breakfast until about 11 am. They then prepare for *Zuhr salah*. After lunch, they may sleep again for an hour or two, then prepare for *Asr salah*. Most people would stay in the *Haram* from *Asr* to *Esha salawat* and then have supper, returning to the *Haram* after *salah* for *Tawaf*. Some people stay awake throughout the night. If you sleep again at around midnight, you can only have sleep for about 2 to 3 hours before you will need to wake up for *Tahajjud salah*.

Sleep deprivation can become a problem if people don't have adequate sleep. Sleep deprivation presents as irritability, dizziness, restlessness, a short temper, headache, etc. It would be difficult to make *'Ibadah* in that state.

Try to work out your own sleep requirements without compromising your *Ibadah*.

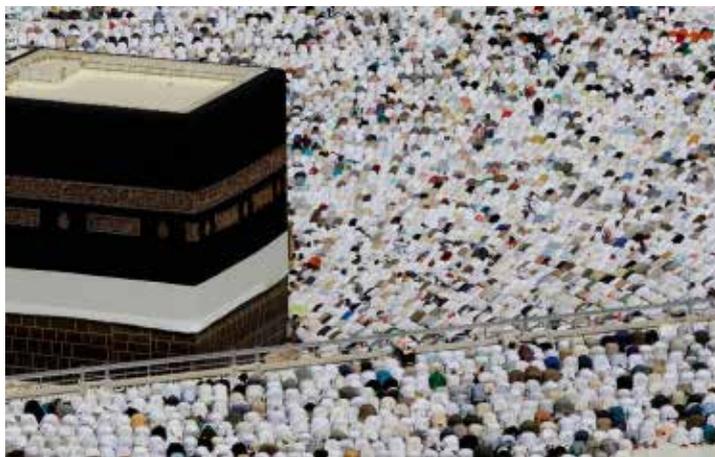
Before departure, wake up before the time of *Tahajjud salah*, perform *tahajjud salah* and *fajr salah* and become accustomed to having shorter bouts of sleep.

Space for Salah.

One of the tests that we have to go through is to accommodate late-comers, who insist on squeezing in to the tiniest space between you and your neighbour, after trampling your foot and toes. I have seen fights develop because of this. There is a space for all of us in the *Haramain*. It is Allah *SWT* who decides who gets which space. If someone squeezes in, I have no way of checking whether Allah *SWT* is testing me or not. I will, therefore, err on the side of caution and try my best to accommodate him. It does not matter if you are inconvenienced in the process. It is not forever but for a short time in the scheme of things. Give him a smile and make some space for him. Who knows whether Allah *SWT* did not determine that space for him.

Keep your feet and toes tucked in if you are sitting in an area where there is increased human traffic. Feet and toes can get injured when heavy people trample on them.

Most people who are moving around are looking for a space. They usually do not look down but around them. Your feet and toes will take the brunt, if they step on them. Black socks merges with the black in the carpets of the *Haramain*, making it more difficult for people to notice. It is always better to find a spot where human traffic is limited by pillars.



Tens of thousands of pilgrims pray on Friday 12th November 2010.
(AP Photo/Hassan Ammar)

Patience

You are going to be tested by Allah *SWT* in various ways whilst on this journey. Always have patience. Develop an attitude that nothing is going to make you lose your temper, that you will not become angry. People around you may entice you to react adversely. Don't. You will be rewarded by Allah *SWT*. Most of the people that will annoy you, you may never see again. So why bother? On the other hand, be kind to them and help them to achieve what they want.

Medical Missions

Most countries have their own Medical Missions. Dedicated Doctors and Nurses are present to take care of the health needs of the *Hujjaj*. They cannot carry all the medication for every illness. They will help you as far as they can. If you need hospital admission, they will help you get to hospital and they will even visit you in hospital. They work long hours. Try not to call them to your hotel unless it is an emergency. Even then, they may have a problem getting to you due to the huge crowds. It may take them an hour or more to visit you in the hotel. In that time, they will be able to help many more at their clinic.

Familiarise yourself as to the location of your Medical Mission so that you can get to them when and if you need them.

If you have a chronic illness, take a letter from your Doctors, stating your illness and the medication you are on including your allergies. This is most helpful to them and saves time. It takes precious time to sort out what tablets a person is on especially if they all mixed up in one container.

The Wearing of *Tobbs* or *Kurtas*

Some *Tobbs* or *Kurtas* have a narrow bottom section that does not allow you to take a big step when you are crossing a busy street, when you need to take long strides to get across. If you fall, you may get injured very severely. If this happens just before *Hajj* when the traffic is at its peak, it can compromise your *Hajj* and that of others around you. This is even more dangerous in people who are not accustomed to wearing *Tobbs* or *Kurtas* in their normal daily activities at home. If you find yourself in this situation, make a slit down the sides of the *Tobb* or *Kurta* to give you more leg room. You can also buy ones that are flared at the bottom. Tailors are everywhere. They will do it while you wait.

***Ziyarat* – Visiting the Historical Sites**

Both in Madinah and Makkah, there are numerous historical sites to visit. This requires walking long distances, sometimes on hilly terrain. You need to use a walking shoe or a runner which is broad-fitting, has a heel and an arch support and laces up or strapped with Velcro. Using sandals that are ill-fitting and strapless can cause injury to the feet.

On top of *Jabale Noor*. Note: the cave of *Hira* faces the *Ka'bah*. Makkah can be seen in the distance.

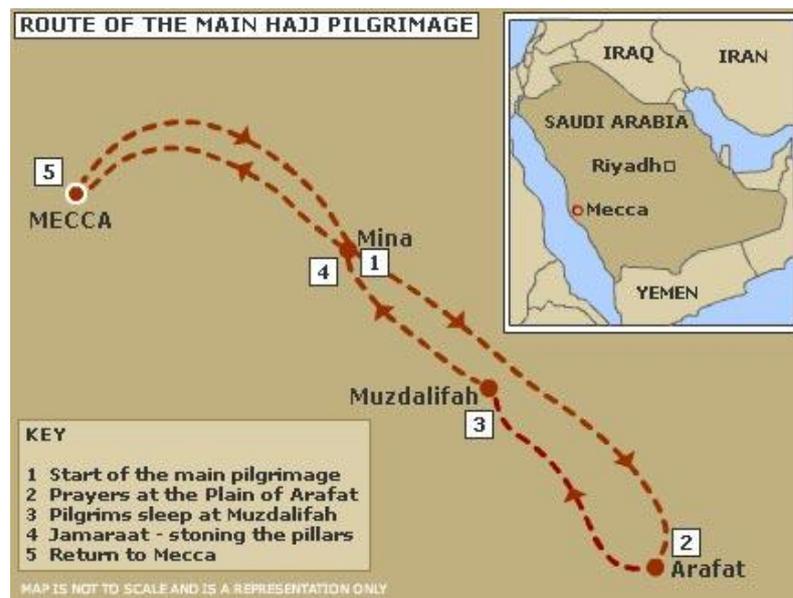


Climbing requires runners or walking shoes. Ankle sprains can occur very easily with sandals.

These shoes can also be used whilst walking through the shopping centres.

-A Week before *Hajj* Begins

The purpose of your journal is to perform *Hajj*. A week before *Hajj* begins, i.e., on the 1st of *Dhul Hijjah*, do a check on your body to make sure that all is in order. If you have any aches or pains or any infection, treat it during the week until you are better. Ease up on your activities so that you can take care not to strain yourself or develop any problems that may compromise your *Hajj*. Relax and rest in anticipation



of the big day. If you are in Azizia, it may become difficult to go to Makkah because of the congestion. It is not necessary to break an arm or a leg to get to Makkah. You are still in the *Haram* area. Rather rest until *Hajj* starts. The rewards from Allah *SWT* will be the same. If you make an intention that you are not going to Makkah to add to the

congestion and to allow others who have come recently to enjoy Makkah, you will be rewarded for this intention. *Insha Allah*.

The Five Days of *Hajj*

There is usually great excitement the night before *Hajj* starts. Go through a health check list to make sure you have all you need for the five days.

Make sure you have enough medication in tightly sealed containers for the five days.

Take your two sets of spectacles, in case one gets misplaced or damaged. You need to be able to read in Mina and Arafat.

You will have to use squatting toilets for the five days. No need to panic. It is not for the rest of your life. Just get used to it on the first day.

Eat small meals during *Hajj*. Avoid overeating. It will make you feel lazy and lethargic.



**Walking
Hajj, between
Muzdalifah
and Arafat.
(as far as the
eye can see)**

Drink adequate amounts of liquids to prevent dehydration and heat exhaustion. You need to be in peak condition for this important occasion.

Be flexible. Your plans may need to change. If you were going to walk to Arafat on the 9th of *Dhul Hijjah*, your physical condition needs to be good. If you find in Mina that you may have a problem, you can take the bus. You can then decide whether you wish to walk from Arafat to Muzdalifah or take the bus. Be flexible without getting disappointed, if things do not work out for you. We plan and Allah plans, and Allah's plans are the best plans.

In Arafat, there are trees present which have grown enough to provide some shade. If you wish to go outside to make your *dua* during the time of *Waquf*, try to find a tree with some shade under which you can stand, protecting yourself from the blazing sun. On the morning of the 10th of *Dhul Hijjah*, watch the crowds very carefully. Go with the flow and not against it. Be patient. Allah *SWT* will reward you, *Insha Allah*. Make sure you take all your medication on time. Diabetics may need to modify their insulin intake when supper will be either non-existent or small on the night of the 9th of *Dhul Hijjah*.

Stay with your "Buddy".

Spend ALL your time in *Ibadah*. The time in Mina is mainly for reflection, on your life so far and on Allah *Ta'ala*, on *Zikr* and reading appropriate parts of the *Qur'an*. Not much physical effort is required except in getting to Mina. You will, *Insha Allah* have enough time to rest.

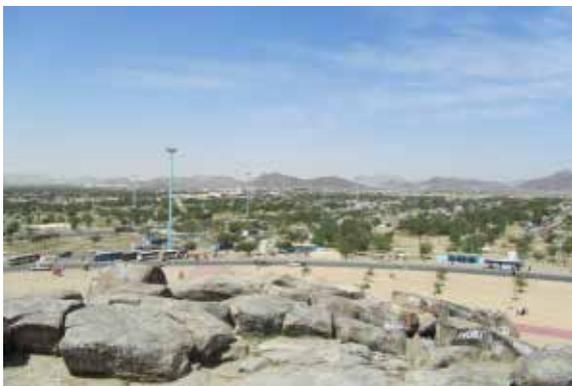
The Day of Arafat is the most important day of *Hajj*. Use it to the maximum. You may not get another chance. Take full advantage of standing outside during *Waquf* to tell Allah *Ta'ala* how Great He is and to thank Him for all that He has done for you and your family and friends.

Ask Him for whatever your needs are with humility and confidence. If you have prepared well, standing in the hot sun for two to three hours would not be a difficult task *Insha Allah*.

Remember to take your medications on time. If you are on a diet, stay strictly on the

diet. This is not the time to get sick because you did not take your medication or follow your diet. Besides compromising your own *Hajj*, you may inconvenience other *Hujjaj*.

„Arafat from top of *Jabale Rahmah*



Do not over eat. Eat small meals, drink adequate amounts of liquids and keep out of the sun until you are required to stand outside.

The return to Mina from Muzdalifah and the day in Mina can be the most difficult of the whole *Hajj*. This is the day when *Shaitaan* is rejected by all the *Hujjaj* in a short space of time. Do not rush to stone the *Shaitaan*. This must be done

deliberately with a lot of emotion. Wait for a suitable opportunity. Stand at a safe spot and observe the scene. Do not rush into the crowd.

Insha-Allah, a suitable opportunity will present itself. Women should be protected from the pushing. There will be a lot of pushing and shoving. Please do not push as it worsens the situation. Your strength will be required here to keep people off yourself and your partner while concentrating on your task. Be on the alert that other people



do not trample on your toes or your feet especially if you are a diabetic. If you lose your footwear and if it is very crowded with people pushing and shoving, leave your footwear. Do not try looking for your footwear in the crowd. A little push can throw you to the ground. People can get trampled in this crowd.

If an injury is sustained on the feet, treat it well with an antiseptic such as *savlon* regularly and apply *Mercurochrome* or a suitable antiseptic cream if the wound is deeper until medical help is available. Do not ignore it as *Hajj* is yet incomplete. There is still *Tawaful Ziyarah* to be done sometimes under very trying conditions. There is no need to rush. *Insha-Allah*, there will be plenty of time to complete *Hajj*.

The Big *Jamarat* Wall

The Big *Jamarat* is now contained in building which looks similar to a car park. The new area contains a wider column-free interior space and expanded *jamarat* pillars many times longer than their pre-2006 predecessors. Additional ramps and tunnels

were built for easier access, and bottlenecks were engineered out. Large canopies are planned to cover each of the three *jamarah* pillars to protect pilgrims from the desert sun. Ramps are also being built adjacent to the pillars to speed evacuation in the event of an emergency. Additionally, Saudi authorities have issued a *fatwa*, decreeing that the stoning may take place between sunrise and sunset, rather than at the mid-day time that most pilgrims prefer. (Wikipedia).

Pharmacies are available at Mina during *Hajj*.

There are many street barbers shaving hair in unhygienic situations. There is a possibility of contracting bacterial and fungal infections, HIV and Hepatitis B and C. There is a possibility that new blades many not be used for each client.

A positive attitude towards helping other pilgrims in whichever way possible can help you to have a very fulfilling *Hajj*, *Insha-Allah*.

Kindly help out in whichever way you can without expecting anything to be done for you.

Paper work to carry with you

Photocopies of your passport, air ticket, A Traveller's Will, Immunisation Card, Hotel Vouchers for Makkah and Madinah, a letter from your Doctor specifying your illnesses and medication and any other documents which you feel are important. Keep these photocopies in a separate location from the originals in case they get lost. Keep your hotel card and the letter from your Doctor with you at all times in case you get ill, you collapse, or you get injured.

Conclusion

Adequate preparations to keep your health in good condition will, *Insha-Allah* make the performance of *Hajj* a spiritually uplifting and memorable experience. Invoking Allah *Ta'ala's* help, in *du'as*, in keeping illness away and in protection from ill health cannot be over-emphasised.

Hajj -
1372.
1953

