

HAJ COMMITTEE OF INDIA

(Statutory body of Ministry of External Affairs)

1/4

Tel : 022-2261 2989/ 2267 0183
Fax : 022-2262 0920
E-mail : hajcommittee@mtnl.net.in
hajcommittee@hajcommittee.com

Haj House,
7-A, M.R.A. Marg,
Mumbai - 400 001.

Ref. No: HC-19/69/2015/1735

Date: 8th August, 2015.

CIRCULAR

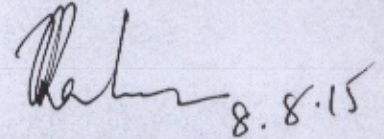
Haj - 2015

37

Sub: Advisory on MERS-CoV infection to Haj pilgrims of Haj 1436 (H) – 2015.

A copy of advisory for the Haj pilgrims, received from Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi regarding MERS-CoV infection, is annexed.

2. The advisory may be circulated and the pilgrims may be sensitized for strict compliance thereof.



(Ataur Rahman)

Chief Executive Officer.

1. The Executive Officer / Secretary, All State / Union Territory Haj Committees.
2. Computer Section, Haj Committee of India.
3. The Chairman & All Members, Haj Committee of India for kind information.

CC to:-

The Joint Secretary (Public Health), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Room No.158, Nirman Bhawan, (A Wing), New Delhi-110 001.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Government of India

Haj Pilgrimage 2015 Advisory to HAJ Pilgrims on MERS CoV infection

WHO has reported 1333 confirmed cases of Middle East Corona virus (MERS-CoV) and around 455 deaths in 26 countries since the outbreak was first reported in April 2012 till 29th July, 2015. In around 17 countries cases of MERS-CoV have occurred as a result of spread from 9 affected countries. The recent spread in Republic of South Korea where around 186 cases and 36 deaths have been reported is the largest outbreak. Most people infected with MERS-CoV had severe illness and pneumonia, with around 36% mortality. The virus can spread from person to person through close contact, so pilgrims living and travelling in close quarters may be at risk, even though the risk is considered very low. However, the disease has High mortality and there is no available vaccine or specific treatment for illness. In addition there is risk of importation of disease virus into India through returning Haj pilgrims.

As a matter of precaution, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India has issued following guidance for the Haj pilgrims and visitors to the Saudi Arabia.

1. Before leaving for India advice, on general health precautions.

- Maintain good personal hygiene
 - Wash hands with soap and water or disinfectant, especially after coughing and sneezing.
 - Use disposable tissues when coughing or sneezing and dispose it in the waste basket.
 - Try as much as possible to avoid hand contact with the eyes, nose and mouth.
 - Avoid direct contact with the infected persons (people with symptoms such as cough, sneeze, expectoration, vomiting, and diarrhoea) and do not share personal gadgets.
- All haj pilgrims should have a prior HEALTH CHECK-UP and obtain a medical fitness certificate duly signed by a Qualified Medical Practitioner (with MBBS qualification, registered with Medical Council of India or with State Medical Council).

2. During Travel To Saudi Arabia

- All travellers suffering from fever while on flight should contact the Medical Help Desk on arrival, at the International Airport for assistance.

3. During period of stay in Saudi Arabia

- 3.1 During the stay/pilgrimage avoid close contact with any person having respiratory illness and follow general health precautions as mentioned above.

3.2 Be watchful for Symptoms of MERS CoV infection.

- Haj pilgrims and visitors to the Saudi Arabia should be familiar with the symptoms of this disease, namely fever, cough, running nose, sore throat and difficulty in breathing. Participants and visitors need to self-monitor their health.

3.3 If you think you have symptoms of MERS CoV infection

- Consult the medical officer in your camp/ contingent. If need be, seek immediate advice from the medical facility provided at the camp dispensary.
- If the advice of the medical doctor is to stay in the camp, avoid close contact with others for 14 days (after your symptoms begin). All close contacts should seek Health care if they develop any symptoms (suffering from fever and symptoms of lower respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath), up to within 14 days after return to India. In case symptoms aggravate (high fever, difficulty in breathing, blue colour of the skin or lips, blood in sputum) report to nearest identified health facility.
- Anyone who contracts MERS-CoV during the visit to Saudi Arabia should consult at health facilities notified by the Government, for proper diagnosis and treatment and should use triple layered surgical masks. All persons, (including a healthcare worker or family members), who were in contact with or has provided care for the patient suffering from acute fever and respiratory symptoms, should seek medical advice.

3.4 Follow simple public health measures to prevent spread of MERS Cov as given in Annexure-1.

4. While returning to India

- While returning to India, if you have fever, symptoms of respiratory illness during flight, you are advised to report to the immigration official or Medical Unit at the arrival.

5. After return to India:

- All haj pilgrims, after returning to India, should continue to be watchful for symptoms of MERS CoV for 14 days after arriving in India, and should report to health facility for treatment in case of development any such symptoms.

Specific Measures Recommended by World Health Organization:

Hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene (covering mouth and nose) when coughing or sneezing, washing hands after contact with respiratory secretions, and keeping a distance of one metre with other persons when having acute febrile respiratory symptoms.

Adhering to good food safety practices, such as avoiding undercooked meat or food prepared under unsanitary conditions, and properly washing fruits and vegetables before eating them.

Do's and Dont's

DOs:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a handkerchief or tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol based hand gel.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid crowded places.
- Stay more than an arm's length from persons afflicted with flu.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Drink plenty of water and eat nutritious food.

DO NOT:

- Shake hands or hug in greeting.
- Take medicines without consulting a physician.