Introduction – Hajj duties

Maintaining Good Health
- Religious duty
- Exercise & Diet

Precautions Before Travel
- Vaccinations
  - Meningitis & Flu
- Chest Infections
- Chronic Illnesses
- Essential Kit

Precautions During Hajj
- Heat & Dehydration
- Other Infections
- Head shaving

Measures Upon Return
- Rest
- Symptoms to look out for
The Hajj

- Fifth pillar of Islam – the Sacrifice by Abraham
- Compulsory* once in a lifetime journey
- Last month of the Islamic Calendar (Dhul Hijjah)
- Lunar year - 10 days shorter than Gregorian year and Hajj occurs at different times of the year
- Pilgrims arrive at different times
- Crowds are Huge with millions of Pilgrims
- Open all hours
The Hajj March

- Duties and rites during Hajj are physically demanding
  - Makkah:
    - Kabah (Tawaaf)
    - Safa & Marwah (Sai’ee)
  - Mina (Tent City):
    - 7 km away, staying 5 days in tents
      - (40 per tent); grouped by country
    - Arafat
    - Muzdalifah:
      - Stay over night in open space (Unsheltered) to collect pebbles
    - Symbolic stone throwing

- It is obligatory that everyone going:
  - Is well prepared
  - Takes the necessary preventative measures
  - Maintains good health
Health: Islamic Principles

- Good health pre-requisite able bodied & means to do so
- Maintaining good health a duty (body is *Amanah*)
- Cleanliness is half of ones Faith
  - Importance of washing hands
- Prevention / quarantine
- For every disease there is a cure (except old age)
- A day lost to ill-health is a day lost in Ibadah
  - Ill health that affects ourselves AND others around us
Preparation before Hajj
Maintaining Good Health

- Physical fitness
  - Walking as much as possible
    - e.g., starting about 6 to 8 weeks before departure, walking greater and greater distances as the time of departure arrives.
  - Total distance to walk:
    - approximately 10 – 12 kilometers to Arafat & 10 – 12 Kilometers back to Makkah.
    - Tawaf ~ approximately 200 meters to 2 kilometers and may take 2 or 3 hours during Hajj
    - Sai (Safa – Marwa) ~ approximately 3.5 km.

- Nutrition
  - Maintain good & sensible eating habits
    - ‘If [a believer] has to fill his stomach, then let him leave one-third for food, one-third for drink and one-third for air’ (Tirmidhi)
Health Issues

Knowing about your own health
- Own disease & medicines
- Chronic illnesses: Heart, Lung, Diabetes

Knowing what to expect:
- Non-Infectious health issues
  - Heat exhaustion & Sunburn
  - High humidity
  - Physical injuries
  - Foot wear problems
  - Stampede Trauma (much improved facilities)
  - Traffic accidents
  - Slaughter related injury

Knowing what to expect:
- Extraordinary mass gathering
  - Shared tents
- Stampedes & Crushing
  - Physically demanding
- Infectious diseases
  - Meningitis & Blood Poisoning
  - Chest infections: Influenza & pneumonia
  - Hepatitis (A, B & C)
  - Polio

Getting Lost
- carry ID: wrist band, Photo ID card
Preparations before the Journey

- GP/nurse best placed to assess health requirements
  - Patients should seek advice from GP in advance

- Make sure GP/nurses knows what performance of Hajj entails
  - Without this they may not be able to give advice appropriate to patient health circumstances

- Added incentive to encourage patients to stop smoking for good.

- Cessation of periods 5mg tds Norethisterone 3 days before and stop on return

- Make sure that patients have good travel & health insurance

- Make sure that patient relatives know how to contact them
The applicant must submit proof of vaccination for meningitis [C] and [meningitis] ACYW135.

The certificate of vaccination should have been issued not more than three years and not less than 10 days prior to entering Saudi Arabia.

For infants and children up to 15 years of age, a vaccination report is required for polio as well as meningitis.

Children over 15 years of age should present the same vaccinations requested for adults.
Prep: Vaccine Preventable Risks in Arabia

- Meningococcal Meningitis (Essential)
- Influenza (strongly advisable)
- Hepatitis B (Advisable)
- Hepatitis A (Advisable)
- Typhoid (Advisable)
- Diphtheria (Advisable)
- Rabies (Consider)
- Tetanus (Consider)
Prep: Flu Vaccines

- Influenza vaccine recommended for all pilgrims
  - Influenza spreads very fast in the crowded situations
  - Important for people over 65
  - Important for people with chronic health problems

- Pneumococcal vaccine also very important
  - for the over 65s
  - for people who have chronic illnesses like
    - asthma,
    - diabetes,
    - chronic heart disease,
    - chronic kidney or spleen disease
Prep: Pre-Hajj Diabetes Check

- About 20% of Muslims in UK have diabetes (higher in elderly)

- About 2 months before going on Hajj patients should:
  - see their GP/Nurse to inform them that they are going on Hajj
  - request an annual review of diabetes.

The health care professional should check

- HbA1c, lipids and kidney function
- Assess diabetes control, any complications from diabetes
- Make changes to medication if required & advise on Hypoglycemia
- Give travel and vaccination advise
- Also use this opportunity to discuss your risk of heart disease, feet problems and any precautions that they need to take and when to seek medical attention.
**Prep: Basic Advice**

**Chronic diseases**
- Asthma, Diabetes Heart
  - Take plenty of medication
  - Take repeat prescription form
  - Keep medication in hand luggage
  - Covering letter

**Serious Conditions**
- Hospital consultant
- Contact number
- Hospital number

**An Example: Diabetics**
- know the symptoms of a “hypo” and how to treat it
- Keep a sugary snack with you
- Keep insulin in the fridge if possible and take plenty of needles
- ID card / Medic alert bracelet
- Storage devices for Insulin
Prep: Basic Advice

- Controlled drugs (e.g., morphine) are banned in Saudi Arabia
  - Get a letter from your GP if you are on them
  - Keep a copy of prescription

- Troublesome teeth
  - See a dentist before going

- Walking
  - Take comfortable sandals
  - Take wheelchair / walking stick if needed
  - Folding chairs available in Saudi for small charge
Prep: Essential Kit List

- Painkillers
- Umbrella, sun cream & Sunglasses
- Clove oil for toothache
- Plasters & bandages
- Insect repellant
- Antiseptic cream (eg., Savlon)
- Water sterilisation tablets
- Salt – 1/2 teaspoon plus 5 level tsp sugar in 2pints of water
- Healthy Hajj Booklet & Information
- Medication & letters with spares
- Vaseline
- Scissors and blades
- Small plasters
- Anti-Dairrhoea medication (eg., Loperamide)
- Throat Lozenges
- Spare spectacles
- Hearing aid batteries
- Moisturiser
At Hajj
Coughs and sneezes spread diseases

**CATCH IT**
Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.

**BIN IT**
Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.

**KILL IT**
Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.

Stop germs spreading
Hajj: Heat and Dehydration

- Extreme temperatures > 35-40°C
- Dry heat
- Exposure of body & minimal clothing
- No head gear
- Sweating
- Physical exertion- walking/ carrying load etc
- Travelling and therefore not drinking plenty – Kidney Stones
- water and salt intake
- Avoid sun when it is around its zenith & stay under shade when possible
- Travel at night
- Use umbrella – preferably white
- Consume large volumes of fluid in the day…plain water or Zam Zam
  - Always carry an extra water canister/bottle
- Avoid open buses
- Wash face/hands and feet….wudu
- Increase salt intake
Hajj: Chest Infections (& ‘Hajj Cough’)

- Can affects all individuals: Hot day & cold night
- Overcrowding
  - Infections are bound to spread easily
- Avoid close contact with people who are ill
  - While visiting the ill keep your distance & spend a little time there
- Pre existing conditions
  - Asthma, diabetes, heart disease makes people more vulnerable
- If people are ill:
  - Cover your mouth before coughing (or use a mask)
  - Avoid spitting phlegm onto the pavement (spreads germs!)
  - Washing hands with soap & water
Hajj: Head shaving

- Protection from risk of Hepatitis B & C, and HIV!
  - Some pilgrims come from places where infection is very common

- Always insist on use of new blade

- Do not share scissors or razors
  - Possibly carry own scissors & disposable razors

- May be possible to use a modern clipper
Hajj: Infection, Blisters or Groins Irritation

- Constant walking whilst hot and sweaty
- Constant rubbing with garments
  - Avoid materials which rub on the skin
  - Use Vaseline or Talcum powder
- Groin irritation and inflammation
  - Use soothing cream like Sudocrem/E45
- Apply plasters / bandages if needed for blisters
- Take adequate rest & elevate feet
- Remove sand if it gets into footwear
  - Never walk barefoot as it burns
Hajj: Advice for Diabetics

- Know the symptoms of a “hypo” and how to treat it
- Keep a sugary snack handy
- Keep insulin in the fridge if possible BUT always keep it away from direct sunlight.
- Take plenty of needles and advise on how to dispose of the needles
- Check blood sugar regularly especially if taking Insulin
- ID card/ Medic alert bracelet
- Storage devices for Insulin
- Diabetes is the commonest cause of feet amputations.
- A small injury on feet can get worse rapidly and result in amputations.
- Use sensible foot wear.
- Keep feet clean and dry.
- Diabetic neuropathy (loss of sensation) in feet or problems with blood circulation - special care needs to be taken and feet examined regularly.
- If there is an injury to feet seek immediate medical attention and start antibiotics.
On Return Home
Home: Chronic Disease Care

- Chronic disease medication
  - Resume normal treatment doses on return

- Diabetes
  - Foot care – consult with Specialist on return

- Hypertension
  - ensure blood pressure check on return
Home: Rest on Return

- Do not return to work straight away after returning from Hajj
- Ensure rest period of 1-2 days after Hajj prior to returning to work or resuming normal daily activities
- Get good amount of sleep on return
- Eat well and drink plenty of fluids on return
- Any worrying symptoms seek Medical Advice (see next slide)
- Remember to inform Dr/nurse that you have been for Hajj
Home: Symptoms on Return

- Doctors should be vigilant for signs of diseases such as:
  - **Meningitis** – flu-like symptoms, rash, muscle pain
  - **Tuberculosis** – unexplained weight loss and cough, with fever
  - **Malaria** – if temperature not settling with 24-48 hours or intermittent spikes
    (N/A for Hajj traveller - relevant for pilgrims who have combined Hajj with travel to endemic areas)
  - **Hepatitis** – jaundice
    - Hep A: oro-faecal route
      (unwell within 3 wks of return)
    - Hep B / Hep C: blood borne if head was shaved
      (unwell more than 6 wks after return)
Meningococcal Disease

- Meningitis is inflammation of the meninges; the layers that surround and protect the brain and part of the spinal cord
- Septicaemia is blood poisoning.
- Meningococcal bacteria can cause both meningitis and septicaemia both are known as meningococcal disease
- Can affect anyone at any time – ‘adults get it too’
- No vaccine to protect against all types of meningitis
- Many people will be left with serious and disabling after-effects

- Septicaemia rash:
  - A rash that does not fade under pressure often occurs with septicaemia
- If someone is ill or getting worse, do not wait for a rash. It may appear late or not at all.
Summary

- Introduction – Hajj duties
- Maintaining Good Health
  - Exercise & Diet
- Precautions Before Travel
  - Vaccinations
    - Meningitis & Flu
  - Chest Infections
  - Chronic Illnesses
  - Essential Kit
- Precautions During Hajj
  - Heat & Dehydration
  - Other Infections
  - Head shaving
- Measures Upon Return
  - Rest
  - Symptoms to look out for
Health = shared responsibility

- Host country
- Pilgrim’s country
- Healthcare Professionals
- Group Leaders
- INDIVIDUALS
Any Questions?
Thanks

- Novartis - Special thanks for unlimited educational grant
- MDDA (Muslim Doctors & Dentists Association)
- MCB (The Muslim Council of Britain)
- The Meningitis Trust
- Department of Health
- Health Protection Agency
- Slide Set Technical Expert Panel: Dr S Shafi, Dr W Hanif, Prof R Gatrad, Dr I Ahmed, Dr M Mirza, Dr N Syed