

New yellow fever vaccination requirements for travellers

Amendment to the period of validity of the international certificate of vaccination against yellow fever, which is now extended to the life of the person vaccinated

27 July 2016

In May 2014, The World Health Assembly adopted an amendment to Annex 7 of the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR), which stipulates that the period of protection afforded by yellow fever vaccination, and the term of validity of the certificate will change from 10 years to the duration of the life of the person vaccinated. On 11 July 2016, the amended IHR Annex 7 entered into force and is legally binding upon all IHR States Parties. The revised Third Edition of the IHR includes this amended text.

Thus, **from 11 July 2016 the certificate of vaccination against yellow fever is valid for the life of the person vaccinated.** This lifetime validity applies automatically to all existing and new certificates, beginning 10 days after the date of vaccination. Accordingly, as of 11 July 2016, revaccination or a booster dose of yellow fever vaccine will not be required for international travellers as a condition of entry into a State Party, regardless of the date that their international certificate of vaccination was initially issued.

Yellow fever is the only disease specified in the IHR for which countries may require proof of vaccination from travellers as a condition of entry under certain circumstances. Likewise, countries may take certain measures if an arriving traveller is not in possession of such a certificate.

Currently, valid IHR international certificates of vaccination are now automatically valid for life of the traveller indicated. Nothing needs to be modified in the certificate; indeed under the IHR, any changes, deletions, erasures or additions may cause a certificate to be rendered invalid.

For new certificates, WHO encourages countries to use words that clearly and unambiguously indicate that the validity of the certificate is for the life of the person vaccinated. In this context, in order to avoid potential confusion and interruption of international travel, WHO suggests using the same terminology in the certificate as adopted in the revised text of Annex 7, which clearly states that the certificates are valid for life.

In accordance with the IHR requirement that these certificates be completed in English or French (and may also be completed in another language in addition to English or French), the terminology used in the revised Annex 7 is as follows:

English: "life of person vaccinated"

French: "vie entière du sujet vacciné"

WHO will continue to report on the list of countries that have yellow fever transmission and those with yellow fever vaccination requirements for travellers (please see below for a link to the WHO website).