



INFORMATION TO GUIDE INDIVIDUAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT OF REFUGEES FLEEING THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Considerations for Health Care Workers

April 5, 2022

BACKGROUND

The war in Ukraine will have direct and indirect health consequences on conflict affected people, including internally displaced people and refugees. Governments in countries receiving refugees are providing them with access to healthcare.^{1,2}

AUDIENCE

This document aims to provide information to guide individual health assessment carried out by frontline health providers at border areas, reception centres,

transit centres and individual clinics as well as national public health agencies / authorities in countries receiving refugees and third country nationals.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

1. Rapid screening and triage of wounded and severely ill that require urgent medical care, refer serious cases to pre-identified partners and hospitals.
2. Provide Psychological First Aid ([see here³](#)).
3. Assess and manage initial curative care needs for acute conditions and unattended chronic conditions requiring immediate management or referral.

¹ The document can also be used to guide assessment of third country nationals who have left Ukraine.

² This document was developed in consultation with UNICEF.

³ www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241548205.

4. Referral of persons requiring a higher level of care that could potentially lead to a rapid deterioration if interrupted.⁴
5. Assess vaccination status, particularly for measles, polio, diphtheria and other vaccine-preventable diseases for children under 6 years, and for tetanus and COVID-19 vaccines for pregnant women; offer vaccinations, if indicated and available at the site.⁵
6. Provide first aid for minor wounds and injuries; and referral of cases that require follow-up.
7. Provide information on refugees' and third-country nationals' rights to healthcare, and where to access care, including immunizations.
8. For infants under 12 months of age ask caregivers about any breastfeeding difficulties or any feeding difficulties for those that are not breastfed. Refer for infant feeding support if needed.
9. Notification to National Public Health Institute cases of severe or outbreak-prone diseases that should prompt preventive or control measures including for any visible signs of acute flaccid paralysis in children under six years of age.

SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

1

COVID-19

- Assess knowledge of COVID-19, assess access where necessary to personal protective equipment (PPE), hand washing and / or sanitizers.
- Assess COVID-19 vaccination status (primary series and booster dose), prioritizing vulnerable groups⁶ in line with national criteria and guidelines, and provide information on official vaccination services.
- If no documentation exists, or if vaccination status is uncertain, offer information, provide vaccinations at point of contact or refer to the official sites for [COVID-19 vaccination](#).
- Identify any current symptoms and triage for care as needed. Inform of where to access testing and care for current and future needs, in particular for vulnerable groups.

2

Vaccine Preventable Diseases

- Screen new arrivals for vaccination status, especially children under 6 and pregnant women. For children, provide vaccination at point of contact or refer to relevant services for vaccination against measles, polio, diphtheria and other vaccine preventable diseases according to the national vaccination schedule; and for pregnant women vaccination at point of contact or refer to relevant services for tetanus and COVID-19 vaccines, if indicated and in line with national guidelines.
- Provide information on where to access or offer vaccination for influenza according to national guidelines.
- For more specific guidance on which vaccinations to prioritize, [see here](#).⁷ If no documentation exists, or if vaccination status is uncertain offer [vaccination](#).⁸
- If vaccines are not available at the site provide information on where to access vaccination, including catch-up vaccination if indicated.⁹

⁴ This includes but is not limited to diabetic medications including insulin, anticoagulants, cardiac medications, anti-epileptics, antipsychotics, antihypertensives, asthma medications etc.

⁵ Where vaccine services are officially established in agreement with the Ministry of Health.

⁶ This includes older people, pregnant women, immunocompromised and individuals with underlying conditions at higher risk of severe disease.

⁷ www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/operational-public-health-considerations-prevention-and-control-infectious.

⁸ www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/infographic-vaccinations-offered-absence-documented-prior-vaccination.

⁹ Where vaccine services are officially established in agreement with the Ministry of Health. Provide a physical or digital record of vaccination as a reference, particularly important for persons in transit to another host country.

HIV and TB

- At different points of contact provide information¹⁰ on the availability of treatment for people with chronic communicable diseases, such as HIV and TB, and that this is free of charge. When providing information to individuals this must be done discreetly and in a way that avoids breaching confidentiality.
- Provide health information and the contact details of referral facilities so that people in need of ongoing care for HIV and / or TB and MDR TB receive this through national programmes.
- Refer for further assessment, counselling and testing individuals presenting with signs and symptoms suggestive of TB or people seeking HIV testing.

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

- Provide health information and the contact details of referral facilities to access care and continuity of treatment for persons with NCDs.
- Refer to pre-identified clinics and hospitals where people in need of advanced care can access care and continue their treatment for cancer, renal dialysis, etc.
- For people with NCDs provide counseling and locations where people can get vaccinated, tested and receive early treatment for COVID-19.
- Screening for priority NCDs (in asymptomatic individuals) should begin once the situation stabilizes.

Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

- Identify persons including children and adolescents with severe and complex mental health and psychosocial support needs who are in need of protection and care and refer them to the appropriate service.
- Provide the contact details of where persons with chronic mental health conditions, including children and adolescents, who are on medication can access care and continue their treatment.
- For substance users in need of opioid agonist therapy, refer for appropriate services.

Sexual and reproductive health including HIV and Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

- Identify women who are pregnant and any urgent pregnancy related health concerns.
- Provide information to pregnant women on where they can access services including antenatal, delivery, postpartum, care for newborns and COVID-19 vaccines and emergency services.
- Provide key messages on how to identify danger signs during pregnancy and the importance of seeking care if such signs detected.
- Provide information on continuation of contraceptive methods and provide or refer for contraception on demand.
- In situations where a GBV survivor, including victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, chooses to disclose their experience refer for age-appropriate clinical management and care for survivors of GBV to pre-identified specialized providers based on consent (referring to protection, legal and MHPSS services where requested) in accordance with the national guidelines, GBV referral pathways, and Guiding Principles.^{11,12}

¹⁰ This can be through written materials, general announcements and online or electronic sources.

¹¹ All frontline service providers should have the latest referral pathways to hand and be trained on how to safely handle a disclosure and make a referral.

¹² Simple information on responding to disclosures of GBV, including a useful list of “do’s and don’ts” can be found in the GBV Pocket Guide. <https://gbvguidelines.org/en/pocketguide/>. This resource is available in multiple languages as a PDF and smartphone app.

- Provide condoms for people living with HIV or at risk of HIV and make available for anyone who requests them or provide information on where they can be obtained.
- Provide or refer for ART and other medications needed by people living with HIV; ensure

testing for HIV and other STIs and appropriate treatment for pregnant women and their infants in line with national guidelines.

- Where needed refer for management of sexually transmitted infections in line with national guidelines.

7

Child Health

- Provide key messages on essential newborn care, where to register newborns and where to seek care in case of an emergency.

- Provide key messages on child health, with particular focus on prevention identification and early treatment of pneumonia and diarrhea, what to do at place of accommodation and how to seek care.

8

Nutrition

- Provide supportive advice to encourage early initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months and continuation of breastfeeding for all infants who are breastfed or are mixed fed. Identify and provide appropriate support to mothers facing difficulties with timely initiation and continuation of breastfeeding.
- For infants who are exclusively dependent on formula milk, early identification

and support to access code-compliant sustainable infant formula supply and equipment for safe preparation and feeding in line with country specific standard operating procedures.

- Advise caregivers on the provision of age-appropriate complementary foods¹³ for infants and young children 6-23 months and the importance of a nutritious diet for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

9

Persons with Disabilities and Rehabilitation

- Undertake individual assessments to identify needs, refer and link with available services including for provision of assistive devices and rehabilitation services.

- Support with in-kind or cash assistance to meet additional needs including daily care and hygiene needs (e.g., including adult-sized diapers, catheters).

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¹³ Complementary foods are food and drinks given to children between six to less than 24 months in addition to breast or formula milk.