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Ukrainian Health Profiles and Clinical Guidance for Newcomers

Washington State welcomes refugees who flee persecution in their home country to rebuild their lives in the state's local communities. Over the past ten years, more than 30,000 refugees from over 70 countries have resettled in Washington through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. This includes more than 6,500 Ukrainians who have resettled in our communities since 2010.



The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) - Refugee and Immigrant Health Program developed epidemiologic profiles of health outcomes observed among refugees from Ukraine who resettled to Washington from October 1st, 2015 through September 30th, 2021 (Ukrainian Health Profile and Screening Guidance: [Adults](#) and [Pediatrics](#)). Health outcomes data are paired with screening guidance, clinician resources, and translated patient resources. The guidance highlights potential health concerns for refugee health screening exams, supports clinicians caring for Ukrainian communities, and ensures appropriate screening and follow-up care for individuals.

Background

According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as of August 11th, 2022, over 10 million Ukrainian nationals have fled their country. The U.S. government has committed to providing refuge for Ukrainians through a range of legal pathways. Through the Uniting for Ukraine program, Ukrainians with the support of a sponsor in the United States are eligible to enter the country on a temporary basis through humanitarian parole. Ukrainian nationals may arrive in the United States through other immigration pathways (see Resources).

Washington is among the top states for newcomers from Ukraine and has a strong established Ukrainian community. In 2021, Washington resettled the highest number of arrivals from Ukraine nationally. Ukrainians may arrive with different immigration statuses and due to this, will be eligible for different benefits and services, such as health services and health insurance.



Scott Lindquist, MD, MPH
State Epidemiologist,
Communicable Disease

Marcia J. Goldoft, MD
Scientific Editor

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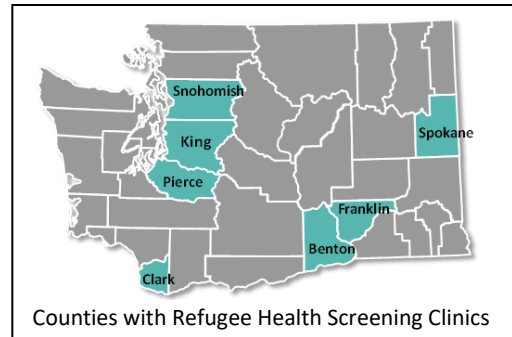
WA State Dept. of Health
Communicable Disease Epi
1610 NE 150th Street
Shoreline, WA 98155
206-418-5500

Refugee Health Screening Exam

The DOH Refugee and Immigrant Health Program (RIHP) oversees refugee health activities in the state including the refugee health screening exam for newly arrived refugees. RIHP maintains the Washington refugee health screening exam guidelines in accordance with CDC recommendations.

It is recommended that all individuals eligible for refugee benefits, including refugees, parolees, asylees, special immigrant visa holders, receive a refugee health screening exam within 90 days of arrival. This includes individuals from Ukraine with refugee, asylee and humanitarian parole status.

Some local health jurisdictions and community clinics provide refugee health screening examinations (Map). At a community clinic the screening examination is an opportunity for individuals to be seen by a clinician familiar with newly arriving clients and their health needs.



RIHP regularly evaluates program data to inform statewide refugee health exam screening guidelines. Understanding health needs within communities is important to inform program activities, provide clinical care and inform health education.

Ukrainian Health Profile, Screening Guidance and Potential Health Concerns

We recommend that all newly arriving, eligible individuals from Ukraine receive a comprehensive refugee health screening exam within 90 days of arrival to screen for and manage illnesses of concern, to update immunizations, and to establish a medical home. Clinicians caring for individuals from Ukraine who may not be eligible for refugee health screening services can consult the information in the profiles to help inform screening and follow-up care.

To support clinicians caring for Ukrainian communities and to ensure that individuals receive appropriate screening and follow-up care, RIHP developed pediatric and adult epidemiologic profiles of health outcomes observed among over 5,500 refugees from Ukraine who resettled to Washington from 10/1/2015 to 9/30/2021. These profiles summarize demographics and health outcomes from the refugee health screening exam and are available on the DOH Ukrainian Health Resources website under Ukrainian Health Profile and Screening Guidance: Adults and Pediatrics (see Resources). The health outcomes data, screening recommendations, clinician tools, translated materials, and resources which address cultural considerations can assist when providing care.

While risk factors and health needs may differ for individuals arriving since the start of the 2022 Russo-Ukraine war, the health outcomes data is intended to serve as a baseline to inform potential conditions for health screening consideration.

Selected Potential Health Conditions

Vaccine-preventable Diseases

Individuals arriving from Ukraine may have low immunization coverage at the time of arrival. Vaccination coverage in Ukraine is among the lowest in the World Health Organization European Region and is at or below the target threshold for DTP, poliovirus, meningococcal conjugate and hepatitis B vaccines.

See the Table for the proportion of Ukrainian refugees who were up-to-date for vaccines per Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations at the time of arrival in Washington. While individuals arriving through the Uniting for Ukraine program must attest to pre-arrival vaccination with one or more doses of measles, poliovirus, and COVID-19 vaccines as part of immigration requirements, they may need post-arrival catch-up doses to complete these vaccine or other recommended ACIP vaccines; children may need vaccinations to meet requirements for timely school entry.

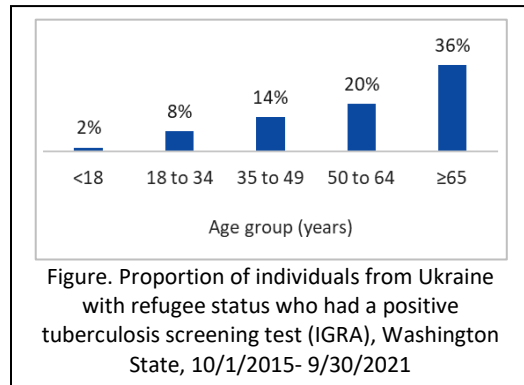
Vaccine	% Up-to-Date at Arrival	
	Children <18 years old	Adults ≥18 years old
Measles, Mumps, Rubella	75%	73%
Varicella	56%	87%
Poliovirus	53%	
Hepatitis B	45%	8%
DTaP/Tdap	23%	8%
Meningococcal (13-17y)	0%	
HPV (13-17y)	0%	
	% Up-to-Date as of 5/5/2022	
COVID-19	2%	9%

Immunization up-to-date status among individuals from Ukraine with refugee status, Washington State, 10/1/2015-9/30/2021

Tuberculosis

Ukraine is considered a high priority country in the WHO European Region with a high burden of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis. In 2020, approximately 30% of TB cases in Ukraine were treated for multidrug resistant (MDR-TB) or rifampin resistant (RR-TB) infections.

Among Ukrainian arrivals to Washington, the proportion of individuals screening positive for tuberculosis infection by IGRA increased with increasing age (Figure). In the oldest age group (≥65 years) 36% of arrivals had a positive tuberculosis screening test (IGRA). Those with positive tests were recommended for referral to the local health jurisdiction’s tuberculosis clinic or to a primary care physician for follow-up evaluation.



Hepatitis B and C

Hepatitis B and hepatitis C infections are key public health issues among arrivals from Ukraine. While the prevalence of hepatitis B infection (hepatitis B surface antigen positive) was <1% in children 17 years and younger, the prevalence among adults was 1.4% and highest among those aged 35-49 and 50-64 years old at 2.0% and 3.1%, respectively. Additionally, 61% of arrivals screened were susceptible to infection (hepatitis B surface antibody negative and hepatitis B core antibody negative) highlighting the opportunity to offer hepatitis B vaccination to individuals per Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations.

Offering new arrivals from Ukraine the appropriate health screening and referral to services can support individuals and families resettling in Washington. These services improve the health of the new arrivals and of the communities that welcome them.

Resources

Uniting for Ukraine: <https://www.dhs.gov/ukraine>

Refugee Processing Center <https://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/>

CDC guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/guidelines/domestic-guidelines.html>

DOH Ukrainian Health Resources <https://doh.wa.gov/about-us/programs-and-services/disease-control-and-health-statistics/refugee-health-program/ukrainian-health-resources>

Provider resources:

Overview for Clinicians Caring for Ukrainian New Arrivals (including immigration routes, cultural considerations, recommended screenings, and benefits and services,):

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/rih/about/ukrainianbrief.pdf>

Refugee resettlement in Washington: <https://doh.wa.gov/about-us/programs-and-services/disease-control-and-health-statistics/refugee-health-program/domestic-medical-screening>

Ukrainian adult health profile: <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/420-425-UkrainianHealthProfileGuidance-Adults.pdf?uid=62d1bd1098722>

Ukrainian pediatric health profile: <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/420-424-UkrainianHealthProfileGuidance-Pediatrics.pdf?uid=62d1bd1098ca6>

Domestic medical screening clinics: <https://doh.wa.gov/about-us/programs-and-services/disease-control-and-health-statistics/refugee-health-program/domestic-medical-screening>

Please contact us if you have any questions

Refugee and Immigrant Health Program

Office of Communicable Disease Epidemiology

Washington State Department of Health

206-418-5500

refugeehealthprogram@doh.wa.gov

www.doh.wa.gov/refugeehealth

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We would also like to acknowledge partners who provided input on the health profiles and guidance including Washington DOH program subject matter experts from the Office of Immunizations, Tuberculosis Program and Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, as well as Washington Former Soviet Union Workgroup community members.