



EXPLANATORY FACTSHEET

Vaccination against COVID-19 in autumn 2022

Information for patients

✓ You will be vaccinated against COVID-19

This factsheet is intended to complement a consultation with a medical professional on your vaccination needs. Please read the information carefully before receiving the COVID-19 vaccination.

Why does it make sense to get a booster vaccination against COVID-19?

More than 97% of the Swiss population over the age of 5 now have antibodies against the coronavirus (through vaccination and/or infection). This means that their immune system has already dealt with the coronavirus and built up some protection. This protection decreases again over time, particularly in people at especially high risk. However, the booster reminds the immune system of how to fight the disease. Vaccination can, at least temporarily, increase immune protection against serious illness, particularly among people at especially high risk. The risk of serious illness is very low for healthy people under 65. The Covid 19 vaccine is safe - also for people of advanced age, those with chronic diseases, and for pregnant individuals.

How will the booster benefit the different population groups this autumn?

People at especially high risk

This group has the highest risk of severe COVID-19 and their protection from previous vaccinations wears off the quickest. The autumn booster vaccination improves protection against serious illness for at least a few months. People with a severely weakened immune system (due to illness or therapy) and those aged 80 and over who have already received a second booster can also strengthen their protection against serious illness again.

> Vaccination before or during pregnancy:

The risk of severe COVID-19 is higher if you are pregnant. Vaccination will protect you and your unborn child. The antibodies that are produced in response to the vaccination can also protect the baby.

All other persons from 16 to 64 years of age, including health and care personnel

The risk of serious illness is very low for vaccinated persons in this group because of pre-existing immunity. The autumn booster offers a small degree of additional, short-term protection against infections that cause a mild form of the disease. It will do little to prevent you from transmitting the virus to other people.

Children and adolescents

The risk of severe COVID-19 is very low in children and adolescents. The vast majority of children from the age of 5 and adolescents already have antibodies against the coronavirus as a result of a previous infection or of vaccination. Children and adolescents therefore gain little benefit from vaccination at present.

Who is recommended to get the booster?

Anyone aged 16 and over can be vaccinated this autumn. Whether you are strongly recommended to get the booster depends on the population group you belong to:

Population group:	Strength of recommendation
People at especially high risk	+++ high
Health workers, caregivers of vulnerable persons	++ medium
All other persons - aged 16 to -64:	(+) low

People at especially high risk: The booster is strongly recommended this autumn for everyone who is at especially high risk.

- Persons aged 65 and over
- People aged 16 and over with certain chronic illnesses¹
- People aged 16 and over with trisomy 21
- Pregnant people

For pregnant people, we recommend an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna) from 12 weeks of pregnancy (i.e. from the 2nd trimester) for the booster vaccination in autumn 2022. In principle, however, it is also possible to receive the booster earlier in pregnancy. A COVID-19 vaccination is also recommended if you are planning a pregnancy.

All pregnant people who are still unvaccinated in autumn 2022 are recommended to receive two doses of the COVID-19 vaccination with a 4-week interval in between.²

All other persons from 16 to 64 years of age including health and care personnel: The booster is being offered to health workers and all carers who wish to reduce their risk of infection a little further in order to continue to care for persons at especially high risk and to relieve the burden on the health care system. The booster is also available to those who would like to reduce their risk of infection for private and/or professional reasons.

Children and adolescents: No booster vaccination is recommended this autumn for persons under 16 years of age. Children and adolescents aged between 5 and 15 who have chronic diseases and are still unvaccinated are recommended to receive one vaccination dose in autumn 2022. Children or adolescents aged between 5 and 15 (with or without chronic diseases) who are not thought to have been infected with the coronavirus so far can be given two doses of the vaccine at an interval of 4 weeks if their parents/guardians so wish.²

¹ You will find a detailed list of illnesses at: [Categories of people at especially high risk](#)

² For people under the age of 30 in certain situations, preferably with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.



What is recommended for people aged 16 and over who have not yet received COVID-19 vaccination?

Due to the high level of protection for the majority of the population, only one vaccination dose is recommended for people who are not at especially high risk. This improves protection against serious illness. Alternatively, two vaccination doses at an interval of 4 weeks are also possible. COVID-19 vaccination with two doses at an interval of 4 weeks is recommended for all persons at especially high risk who are still unvaccinated in autumn 2022.²

Which vaccines are being used?

We recommend booster vaccination preferably with a variant-adapted (bivalent) mRNA vaccine or with the Novavax protein vaccine, if these are available. It does not matter which vaccine was used for the previous vaccinations.

With regard to the mRNA vaccines (Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna), both the original (monovalent) and a variant-adapted (bivalent) vaccine are suitable for vaccination this autumn. Current data show that the original mRNA vaccines still provide effective protection against severe illness and hospitalisation caused by the new Omicron variants.

Important: Individuals who are pregnant or breastfeeding should be vaccinated with an mRNA vaccine (not the Novavax protein vaccine).

When can the booster vaccination be given?

The autumn 2022 booster can be given from 4 months after your last COVID-19 vaccination or from 4 months after you were infected with the coronavirus. This also applies to persons at especially high risk who have already received a second booster vaccination.

Other vaccinations with inactivated vaccines (such as the flu vaccination) can be given at the same time as, or before or after a COVID-19 vaccination.

What side effects can the vaccination have?

If side effects do occur, they are usually mild to moderate and last only a few days. Similar to other vaccinations, they usually take the form of reactions at the vaccination site (usually pain, but also redness, swelling) or general symptoms such as tiredness, headache, muscle and joint pain, chills and fever. Symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, dizziness and swelling of the lymph nodes may also occur.

Severe allergic reactions to a component of the vaccine (e.g. to polyethylene glycol/PEG) are very rare and usually occur within a few minutes of vaccination. The first signs may include shortness of breath, a drop in blood pressure or a severe reaction at the vaccination site. These severe allergic reactions can usually be treated effectively.

Recommendation: If your first series of vaccinations went smoothly, stay at the vaccination centre for 5 minutes after receiving the booster (for the first vaccination you stay at the vaccination centre for 15 minutes).

mRNA vaccines: In very rare cases, inflammation of the heart muscle or the outer lining of the heart (pericardium) has been observed shortly after vaccination, mostly in young men. In the vast majority of cases, these conditions are mild and can be treated easily. Typical symptoms are chest pain, shortness of breath and palpitations. Inflammation of the heart muscle or pericardium may also occur after infection with the coronavirus.

The mRNA vaccines and the Novavax protein vaccine have been proven in studies to be highly effective and safe. Vaccination is safer than infection and its potentially severe consequences. Vaccination improves protection against a severe form of the disease and thus reduces the risk of long-term consequences of the COVID-19 (post-COVID conditions). Other health problems - unrelated to the vaccination - can still occur, sometimes directly after a vaccination. This does not mean that they are a consequence of the vaccine.

Important: Please report any serious or unexpected symptoms after a COVID-19 vaccination to a doctor, pharmacist or vaccination centre.

When should you not get vaccinated with an mRNA vaccine/ the Novavax protein vaccine?

If you know that you suffer from hypersensitivity to the components of the vaccine. In the case of mRNA vaccines, this is mainly hypersensitivity to polyethylene glycol (PEG) or tromethamine (TRIS). In the case of the Novavax protein vaccine, this is mainly hypersensitivity to polysorbate 80, saponin or matrix-M. If this applies to you, please seek advice from an allergy specialist.

In the following cases, caution is advised when getting vaccinated:

- If you are currently ill and have a raised temperature.
→ In this case, postpone the vaccination.
- If you have an acute allergy or are taking blood-thinning medication.
→ In both cases, inform the specialist at the centre so that they can take special precautions.
- If you had a severe allergic reaction after a previous COVID-19 vaccination.
→ Please discuss how to proceed with your doctor.

Recommended off-label use of vaccines:

The vaccination recommendations are made on the basis of the latest scientific information. In certain cases, the recommendations may differ from what is stated in Swissmedic authorisations. These recommendations are known as recommended 'off-label use'. Some COVID-19 vaccines are also used outside the terms of their marketing authorisation. This is permitted if such use falls within the scope of the medical duty of care and complies with the recognised rules of medical science. However, the person being vaccinated must be informed appropriately and give their consent.

Where can I make an appointment for a vaccination?

Your canton is responsible for the vaccinations. You will find information on how to make an appointment for a vaccination on the website of your home canton (foph-coronavirus.ch/cantons).

You will find further information on the COVID-19 vaccination on the FOPH website: www.foph-coronavirus.ch/vaccination

Do you have any other questions? You can discuss these with the medical professional who is vaccinating you. This factsheet should not be regarded as an alternative to a consultation with a specialist on your vaccination needs.