



Information on COVID-19 vaccination this autumn for people at especially high risk

Key points

- People at especially high risk of severe COVID-19 illness can strengthen their protection at least temporarily by getting a booster vaccination this autumn.
- A booster is strongly recommended this autumn for everyone who is at especially high risk:
 - People aged 65 or over
 - People aged 16 or over with certain chronic conditions
 - People aged 16 or over with Down's syndrome
 - Pregnant women
- The COVID-19 vaccination is safe – including for older people and those with certain chronic conditions¹ as well as pregnant women.
- For more information → [Factsheet 'Information on the COVID-19 vaccination'](#)

Who is considered at especially high risk?

- a) People aged 65 or over
- b) People aged 16 or over with certain forms of chronic conditions¹:
 - High blood pressure
 - Cardiovascular diseases
 - Diabetes
 - Respiratory diseases
 - Cancer
 - Diseases and therapies that weaken the immune system
 - Obesity (BMI ≥ 35 kg/m²)
 - Chronic kidney disease
 - Liver cirrhosis
- c) People aged 16 or over with Down's syndrome
- d) Pregnant women

What does 'especially high risk' mean?

It means that if you catch the coronavirus, you have a high risk of suffering from severe illness. It also means that the protection from previous vaccinations wears off more quickly. COVID-19 may have severe or very severe symptoms for you if you are at especially high risk. For example, you may suffer from severe respiratory distress if you get pneumonia, which means you would need oxygen and would have to be hospitalised. It may take a long time for you to recover. If the symptoms get worse, you may have to be treated in an intensive care unit. You might need to be placed on a ventilator. COVID-19 can also damage the organs and in the most severe cases, it can cause death. Following a severe infection, long-lasting health problems may occur (post-COVID conditions) – such as breathlessness during strenuous activities, exhaustion and concentration problems.

Why am I being advised to get a booster this autumn?

More indoor mixing means that transmission of coronavirus is likely to increase again this autumn. The risk of catching COVID-19 and getting sick is therefore higher in the winter months. You are at high risk of severe illness and for you the protection from previous vaccinations wears off sooner. Vaccination allows you to strengthen your protection against severe illness and its complications, at least temporarily. If you get vaccinated, you also reduce the risk of potential long-term effects of the coronavirus (post-COVID conditions).

When should the booster be given?

The autumn booster can be given from 4 months after the last COVID-19 vaccination or 4 months after a known coronavirus infection. This also applies to people at especially high risk who have already received a second booster. This will strengthen their protection against severe illness.

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

Please note: If you have a high temperature, are sick or feel unwell, you should postpone your vaccination appointment.

Which vaccine is recommended?

We recommend vaccination with a variant-adapted (bivalent) mRNA vaccine or the Novavax protein vaccine, if available. It doesn't matter which vaccine was administered for previous vaccinations.

¹ The detailed list of conditions can be found at:
[Categories of people at especially high risk](#)



In terms of mRNA vaccines (Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna), both the former (monovalent) vaccines and the variant-adapted (bivalent) vaccines are suitable for the boosters being offered this autumn. Current data show that the former mRNA vaccines still provide effective protection against severe illness and hospitalisation caused by the new Omicron variants.

Important: those who are pregnant or breastfeeding should receive an mRNA vaccine (not the Novavax protein vaccine).

What happens if I haven't yet been vaccinated against COVID-19?

Everyone who is at especially high risk who has not been vaccinated is advised to get a COVID-19 vaccination this autumn, with two doses of vaccine, 4 weeks apart.²

How can I take extra precautions?

If you are at especially high risk, you can take extra precautions to protect yourself from a coronavirus infection, e.g. wearing a mask indoors. Please follow our basic principles

→ [Website 'Protect yourself and others'](#).

What about carers of people at especially high risk?

The booster is recommended for all carers and healthcare professionals who would like to reduce their risk of infection so they can continue to look after people at especially high risk and deliver care.

The additional booster vaccination will offer this group minimal and short-term protection against infections with mild illness.

Vaccination does not prevent transmission of the virus.

Further information

Costs: You don't have to pay for a COVID-19 vaccination if it is recommended for you.

Where and when you can get vaccinated: Find out where you can get vaccinated on the website or by calling the Infoline for your canton (www.foph-coronavirus.ch/cantons)

You will find more information on the COVID-19 vaccination on the FOPH website: www.bag-coronavirus.ch/vaccination or ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Links:

→ [How does the vaccination work? | FOPH \(bag-coronavirus.ch\)](#)

→ [Frequently asked questions \(FAQs\) \(admin.ch\)](#)



² Preferably with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for under 30s.