



Information on COVID-19 vaccination this autumn

Key points

- At this point in the pandemic, nearly everyone in Switzerland has either been vaccinated and/or had and recovered from COVID-19. Their immune systems have therefore been exposed to the coronavirus. The virus variants currently in circulation also cause milder disease than earlier variants. This is why the situation has been revised for autumn 2022 and the vaccine recommendations have been adapted accordingly.
- People at especially high risk of severe COVID-19 illness can strengthen their protection against severe disease at least temporarily by getting a booster. The booster vaccination is therefore strongly recommended for everyone who is at especially high risk.
→ [Factsheet for people at especially high risk](#)
- For all other people aged 16 or over, the autumn booster offers minimal and short-term protection against infections with mild illness. Thanks to existing protection, the risk of severe illness for vaccinated people in this group is very low.

Who is advised to get a booster this autumn?

The autumn booster is strongly recommended for everyone at especially high risk:

- People aged 65 or over
- People aged 16 or over with a chronic condition
- People aged 16 or over with Down's syndrome
- Pregnant women

Anyone else aged 16 or over can also get vaccinated this autumn. The grade of recommendation varies depending on the population group.

Population group	Grade of recommendation
People at especially high risk (PEHR)	+++ high
Healthcare workers, carers of PEHR	++ medium
All other people aged 16-64	(+) low

The vaccination is also recommended for anyone else who has not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19.

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

- People at especially high risk
This group has the highest risk of severe illness and their protection from previous vaccinations wears off the quickest. The additional booster vaccination improves protection against severe illness at least for a few months. People with a severely weakened immune system (due to illness or therapy) and those aged 80 or over who have already received a second booster can strengthen their protection against severe illness by getting an autumn booster.
- Healthcare workers, carers
The risk of severe illness for vaccinated people in this group is very low thanks to existing protection. The additional booster provides minimal and short-term protection against coronavirus infections with mild illness. Vaccines cannot completely prevent transmission of the virus to others. The booster vaccination is recommended for everyone in this group who would like to slightly reduce their risk of infection so they can continue to look after people at especially high risk and deliver care.

- Everyone else aged 16 to 64

The risk of severe illness for vaccinated people in this group is very low due to existing protection. The additional booster provides minimal and short-term protection against infections with mild illness. Vaccines cannot prevent transmission of the virus to others.

The booster vaccination is available to anyone who would like to slightly reduce their risk of infection for private and/or professional reasons.

Booster vaccinations are not recommended for those aged under 16 this autumn as the risk of severe COVID-19 disease is very low in children and adolescents. The vast majority of children aged 5 or over and adolescents already have coronavirus antibodies from a previous infection or vaccination.

When should the booster be given?

The autumn booster can be given from 4 months after the last COVID-19 vaccination or from 4 months after a known coronavirus infection.

This also applies to people at especially high risk who have already received a second booster vaccination.

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.

What happens for people aged 16 or over who have not yet received a COVID-19 vaccination?

At this point in the pandemic, nearly all unvaccinated people have been infected with coronavirus at least once. Their immune systems have therefore been exposed to the virus. For this reason, only one dose of vaccine is recommended for people who are not at especially high risk. This provides enhanced protection against severe illness. Alternatively, they can receive two doses of vaccine, 4 weeks apart. For people at especially high risk, see the separate factsheet

→ [Factsheet for people at especially high risk](#).

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.



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).

Are some vaccines not suitable for certain people?

The following people should **not receive an mRNA vaccine**:

- People with a severe confirmed allergy to a component of the vaccine, e.g. Polyethylene glycol (PEG) or Tromethamine (TRIS).

The following people should **not receive the Novavax protein vaccine**:

- People with a severe confirmed allergy to a component of the vaccine, particularly Polysorbate 80, Saponin, Matrix-M.

In these cases, please consult an allergist. You will find more information on the FOPH website:

www.foph-coronavirus.ch/vaccination.

Is the vaccination safe?

The vaccination against COVID-19 is safe. In Switzerland, every vaccine needs to be authorised, for which it must meet strict safety, efficacy and quality requirements. Vaccines are only recommended for use in Switzerland if the benefits significantly outweigh the risks. Experts continue to monitor the safety and efficacy of the vaccines.

What are the possible side effects?

Side effects are possible with any vaccination. They are usually mild to moderate and subside quickly. These side effects are common after vaccinations:

- Pain, redness or swelling at the injection site on your arm.
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle and joint pain
- General symptoms such as chills, feeling feverish or slight high temperature
- Nausea
- Swollen or painful lymph nodes in the armpit
- Rash and itching

These reactions show that your body is building protection against the disease. The side effects usually subside within a few days. If you still have side effects after a week, if they are getting worse, or if they are worrying you, talk to your doctor.

In rare cases, there may be severe side effects. For example, some people have experienced a severe allergic reaction directly after being vaccinated, with symptoms such as severe swelling, redness, itching or difficulty breathing.

In very rare cases, inflammation of the heart muscle or of the outer lining of the heart has been observed within 14 days of the vaccination. This is usually mild and easily treatable. Typical symptoms of inflammation of the heart muscle are chest pain, difficulty breathing and palpitations, which usually occur within 2 weeks of the vaccination.

If you experience these symptoms, contact your doctor immediately.

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.foph-coronavirus.ch/vaccination or ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Links:

- [How does the vaccination work? | FOPH \(bag-coronavirus.ch\)](#)
- [Frequently asked questions \(FAQs\) \(admin.ch\)](#)

