



# Information on the COVID-19 vaccination

## The key points in brief

- **All people at especially high risk** aged 16 or over are advised to get a COVID-19 vaccination this autumn/winter. These include:
  - all persons aged 65 or over
  - persons aged 16 or over with a chronic condition
  - persons aged 16 or over with trisomy 21.
- By getting the vaccination, persons at especially high risk can give themselves greater protection for several months against developing a severe case of COVID-19.
- **Pregnant women** can obtain a vaccination following a consultation with their doctor.

Almost everyone in Switzerland has come into contact with the coronavirus by now, meaning that their immune system has already had to respond to the virus. The coronavirus variants currently circulating also tend to cause only mild cases of COVID-19 among persons without any risk factors. As a result of the greater contacts that people are likely to have in enclosed spaces, the coronavirus may well spread more again in the coming winter season. And this in turn may increase the likelihood of contracting COVID-19.

### Who is advised to get vaccinated this autumn/winter?

All **people at especially high risk** aged 16 or over are advised to get a COVID-19 vaccination this autumn/winter. Such people have an increased risk of developing a severe case of COVID-19; and their immunity against contracting COVID-19 tends to decline faster, too. If you are such a person, getting the vaccination will improve your protection from developing severe COVID-19 and any associated complications for several months.

### What people are at especially high risk?

- a) Persons aged 65 or over
- b) Persons aged 16 or over with certain forms of the following chronic conditions<sup>1</sup>:
  - high blood pressure
  - cardiovascular disease
  - diabetes
  - pulmonary and/or respiratory diseases
  - cancer
  - diseases and/or therapies that weaken the immune system
  - obesity (a BMI of 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or more)
  - renal insufficiency
  - cirrhosis of the liver.
- c) Persons aged 16 or over with trisomy 21.

### What is the recommendation if you are pregnant?

If you are pregnant, you can obtain a COVID-19 vaccination this autumn/winter after individual consultation with your doctor. Such vaccination may be sensible in some cases, because it will provide protection from developing severe COVID-19 for several months. With the coronavirus variants currently in circulation, the risk of developing pregnancy complications or of giving birth prematurely as a result of a COVID-19 infection is lower than was the case with previous variants.

### What recommendations apply for the rest of the population?

For all other persons under the age of 65, there is no recommendation to get a COVID-19 vaccination this autumn/winter. For such persons, the vaccination will provide moderate short-term protection from contracting and developing mild COVID-19.

For the same reason, there is no COVID-19 vaccination recommendation this autumn/winter for healthcare professionals or caregivers. Such persons may opt to get themselves vaccinated, however, if they personally prefer to somewhat reduce their risk of contracting and developing mild COVID-19.

### Information on the vaccination

#### Timing:

The ideal time to obtain a COVID-19 vaccination this autumn/winter is between mid-October and mid-December. The vaccination can be administered any time from 6 months since the last COVID-19 vaccination or from 6 months since a known coronavirus infection. Other vaccinations with inactivated vaccines (such as the flu vaccination) can also be administered before, at the same time as or after a COVID-19 vaccination.

#### Vaccine:

We advise you to get vaccinated with an mRNA vaccine that has been modified in the light of the current coronavirus variants or with a similarly modified protein-based Novavax vaccine. Which vaccine(s) you have previously received is of no relevance here.

*Please note:* If you are pregnant or are breastfeeding, or if you have a severely weakened immune system, the mRNA vaccine is advised.

*Allergies:* If you have confirmed allergies to components of vaccines, please consult an allergist.

<sup>1</sup> The detailed list of such conditions can be found at: *Categories of people at especially high risk*



#### Side effects:

Side effects are possible with any vaccination. They are usually mild to moderate and subside quickly.

Common side effects include reactions at the injection site such as pain, redness and/or swelling, headaches and fatigue. Muscle and joint pain and general symptoms such as chills, feeling feverish or a high temperature may also occur.

In very rare cases, severe side effects may be felt. A small number of people, for example, have experienced a severe allergic reaction directly after being vaccinated, with symptoms such as severe swelling, redness, itching or difficulty breathing. In very rare instances, an inflammation of the heart muscle or of the outer lining of the heart has been observed within 14 days of the vaccination. These cases have generally been mild and easily treatable. Typical symptoms of such inflammation of the heart muscle are chest pain, difficulty breathing and palpitations, which usually occur within 2 weeks of the vaccination.

Further side effects may also be felt, with symptoms of varying durations. If you experience any severe or unexpected condition following a COVID-19 vaccination, contact a doctor, a pharmacist or the place you received your vaccination.

Health problems can develop at any time. So if a health problem does arise immediately after a COVID-19 vaccination, this does not necessarily mean that the vaccination is the cause.

#### Costs:

Any recommended COVID-19 vaccination is free of charge, and will be covered by the compulsory health insurance of:

- any persons at especially high risk;
- pregnant women, following an individual consultation with their doctor.

#### **How can I give myself additional protection?**

You can take other actions, too, to reduce your risk of coronavirus infection, such as wearing a facemask in indoor locations.

To find out more, please visit our [‘Protect yourself and others’ webpage](#).

#### **Further information**

Coronavirus Infoline: +41 58 463 00 00

→ [How does the vaccination work?](#)

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