



# Information on the COVID-19 vaccination

## The key points in brief

- COVID-19 vaccination is recommended in autumn/winter for the following groups:
  - all persons aged 65 or over
  - persons aged 16 or over with a chronic condition
  - persons aged 16 or over with trisomy 21
  - pregnant persons
- By receiving the vaccination, these individuals can give themselves greater protection for several months against developing a severe case of COVID-19.

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 persons aged 16 or over who are at an increased risk of developing severe COVID-19 are advised to get a COVID-19 vaccination this autumn/winter. Such persons also tend to experience faster rates of decline in their COVID-19 immunity. 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 persons are at an increased risk of developing severe COVID-19?

- a) Persons aged 65 or over
- b) Persons aged 16 or over with certain forms of the following chronic conditions:
  - 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?

Vaccination is recommended for pregnant persons, to protect the mother-to-be and the unborn child against their slightly increased risk of developing a severe case of COVID-19 and pregnancy complications. Vaccination is particularly recommended for any pregnant persons with a pre-existing condition.

### 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 six months since the last COVID-19 vaccination or from six months since a known coronavirus infection.

You can have a flu vaccination at the same time as a COVID-19 vaccination or any time before or after a COVID-19 vaccination. If you need advice, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

#### Vaccine:

We advise vaccination with an mRNA vaccine that has been modified to the current coronavirus variants, regardless of what vaccine(s) you may have received in previous vaccinations.

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

#### 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:**

The costs of a recommended COVID-19 vaccination is covered by the compulsory health insurance (subject to deductible and retention fee). Individuals who get vaccinated at a pharmacy must pay for the vaccination themselves.

Persons for whom COVID-19 vaccination is not presently recommended may also choose to have themselves vaccinated if they wish and pay for such vaccination themselves.

**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**

- [www.bag.admin.ch/vaccination-covid19](http://www.bag.admin.ch/vaccination-covid19)
- [www.bag.admin.ch/protect-yourself-and-others](http://www.bag.admin.ch/protect-yourself-and-others)
- [www.protectionagainstflu.ch](http://www.protectionagainstflu.ch)
- Vaccination infoline: 0844 448 448