



## COVID-19 VACCINATION

# General information on COVID-19 vaccination

### Is the vaccination safe and effective?

Since every vaccine in Switzerland must be authorised and recommended, it has to meet stringent safety, efficacy and quality requirements. Swissmedic, the Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products, has carefully assessed and authorised the vaccines against COVID-19. They are safe and they work. Several tens of thousands of people have received the vaccines in clinical trials. They are also safe and effective for the elderly and those with chronic illnesses. Since their approval, several million people have received these vaccines. So far there have not been noticeable problems with serious side effects, either in the trials or in the vaccination programmes. Experts will continue to monitor the safety and efficacy of the vaccines.

In general: The risk of serious side effects after the vaccination is much lower than the danger of falling seriously ill after being infected with the coronavirus.

### Who will be vaccinated first?

The first people to be vaccinated in Switzerland are those for whom COVID-19 is especially dangerous. This means people aged 65 and over and adults with certain chronic diseases. Since the availability of vaccines is initially limited, people aged 75 and over and people with chronic diseases who are at the highest risk of suffering a severe case of COVID-19 will be given the first appointments for the vaccination. Next to receive the vaccination will be healthcare personnel and care staff looking after vulnerable people. Then close contacts – in other words people who live with vulnerable people or who care for them on a private basis – will be given the vaccination.

### Where and when can I be vaccinated?

The federal government has drawn up a vaccination strategy and vaccination recommendations. The cantons are responsible for vaccination.

Find out from your cantonal website or infoline ([www.foph-coronavirus.ch/cantons](http://www.foph-coronavirus.ch/cantons)) who can currently be vaccinated and where, or ask your doctor or pharmacist.

### Who should not be vaccinated?

We do not recommend the COVID-19 vaccination for the following:

- People with a severe, confirmed allergy to an ingredient of the vaccines, particularly polyethylene glycol (PEG).
- Children and adolescents under the age of 16.  
So far not enough data is available on vaccination in this age group.

There is still not enough data on the vaccination in pregnancy. We currently do not recommend COVID-19 vaccination for pregnant women across the board. However, vaccination may make sense for those with specific chronic diseases with the highest risk of contracting a severe case of COVID-19. Please talk to your doctor if you're pregnant and have a chronic disease.

Please note: If you have a high temperature or are feeling ill or unwell, postpone your vaccination. If you are waiting for your COVID-19 test result, are in isolation or in quarantine, do not have the vaccination now. Go for the vaccination as soon as you can.

### What happens during the vaccination?

You receive an injection in the upper arm.

### How many injections do I have to have?

Two injections are needed. You can receive the second injection about four weeks after the first.

Important: You must receive both injections in order to obtain the best possible protection.

### How does the vaccination protect me?

Your body gradually builds up protection against COVID-19. This takes up to around one or two weeks after the second injection. The vaccination strengthens your body's defences. It helps your body fight the virus. The risk that you will get COVID-19 is then very small.

Important: Complete protection is not possible. Some people can still get COVID-19 despite being vaccinated. But the vaccination does increase your chances of avoiding serious illness. You will find further details on how the vaccination works here: [www.foph-coronavirus.ch/mrna](http://www.foph-coronavirus.ch/mrna)

**PROTECT YOURSELF  
AND OTHERS****How long does the vaccination protect me?**

That's still not clear. Experts are currently investigating how long the vaccination provides protection. It may be that another vaccination is needed later on.

**Can I get COVID-19 because of the vaccination?**

No. You do not get COVID-19 as a result of the vaccination. The vaccines do not contain any coronaviruses. Please note: Keep following the rules on hygiene and social distancing both before and after any vaccination.

**Should I have the vaccination if I've had COVID-19?**

The vaccination also makes sense if you've already had COVID-19. During the weeks after the illness you're protected from renewed infection. Three months or more after you have had the disease we recommend the vaccination.

**Are there any side effects?**

Side effects can occur with any vaccination. They are usually mild and pass quickly. Serious side effects occur very rarely. In individual cases, for example, people have experienced a serious allergic reaction directly after the COVID-19 vaccination. Besides that there have so far been no noticeable problems with serious side effects. Such side effects could be expected to emerge within a few months of the vaccination. Experts are keeping a close eye on potential indications.

**What side effects are possible?**

- The place on your arm where you received the injection can become inflamed, painful or swollen.
- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Muscle and joint pains
- General symptoms such as shivering, feeling feverish or a mild fever

These side effects are common after a vaccination. Since they indicate that the body is building up protection against the disease, they are a good sign when they are mild.

An allergic reaction is typically associated with severe swelling, redness, itching or shortness of breath immediately after the injection. You should contact your doctor immediately if you experience such symptoms.

**How long can side effects last?**

The side effects usually disappear within a few days. If you are still experiencing side effects after a week, or if they get worse or cause you concern, contact your doctor.

**What must I do after the vaccination?**

You have received the first injection. You should immediately arrange an appointment for the second injection around four weeks later. Please remember: Keep following the rules on hygiene and social distancing.

**I am vaccinated. Can I infect other people with the coronavirus?**

The vaccination protects you against COVID-19. But we don't yet know whether it also prevents the virus from being passed on. So it is still possible that you are able to infect other people despite being vaccinated and having no symptoms. You should therefore keep following the rules on hygiene and social distancing.

**Who pays for the vaccination?**

Your vaccination is free of charge. Your health insurer pays for part of the vaccination. The federal government and the cantons will pay the remainder.

**Is the vaccination voluntary?**

Yes. Vaccinations are voluntary in Switzerland. There are no plans for compulsory vaccination.

**Where can I find further information?**

You will find further information on COVID-19 vaccination on the FOPH website ([www.foph-coronavirus.ch/vaccination](http://www.foph-coronavirus.ch/vaccination)) or ask your doctor or pharmacist.

