



Information for adults who are close contacts of people at especially high risk

Why should I be vaccinated?

- We recommend vaccination against COVID-19 for everyone aged 12 and over. We also recommend vaccination against COVID-19 with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for children aged between 5 and 11 (see fact sheet "*COVID-19 vaccination for children aged 5 to 11*").
- Vaccination protects you against COVID-19, an illness that is usually mild, but can sometimes also be serious. The mRNA vaccines provide very effective protection against severe cases of COVID-19 requiring hospital admission. So far, it is unclear whether the protection against severe disease decreases in those aged under 65 and for new virus variants.
- Lasting health problems can occur after a bout of COVID-19 (for example breathing difficulties when carrying out strenuous activities, or tiredness). This can occur even in younger, healthy individuals. By having the vaccination you can greatly lower the risk of suffering from the illness and its consequences.
- Immunisation against COVID-19 means that you stay healthy and can take care of those who are at especially high risk, whether in your private life or at work.
- Once you are fully vaccinated, the likelihood of becoming infected with coronavirus is greatly reduced and with it the risk of transmitting the virus. However, the vaccination does not provide 100% protection and protection wanes over time. The protection afforded by the vaccine and the speed with which it decreases can vary depending on the virus variant. But vaccination reduces at least temporarily the risk of passing on the coronavirus, which means you can protect people at especially high risk in your family, in your household or at work.
- The vaccines authorised in Switzerland are safe and effective.

There are some people for whom the coronavirus is especially dangerous. In a worst-case scenario, COVID-19 can prove fatal for these people. So if you come into close contact with people who are at especially high risk, it's a good idea to be vaccinated yourself, as vaccination does not work equally well in everyone who receives the vaccine. For people with a weakened immune system in particular the vaccination may be less effective. Also, for medical reasons not everyone who is at especially high risk can be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Who is considered to be at especially high risk?

- People aged 65 and over
- Pregnant women
- Adults with trisomy 21
- Adults with certain forms of the following chronic illnesses¹:
 - high blood pressure
 - cardiovascular illnesses
 - diabetes
 - pulmonary and respiratory illnesses
 - cancer
 - illnesses and treatments that weaken the immune system
 - obesity (BMI ≥ 35 kg/m²)
 - renal insufficiency
 - liver cirrhosis

Am I a 'close contact'?

You are a close contact if you live in the same household as someone who is at especially high risk. Or if you look after relatives who are at especially high risk.

You are also a close contact if you come into contact with people at especially high risk in connection with your work – for example if you are a nurse or doctor, work in a hospital or in home healthcare, in an old people's home, an institution for people with disabilities or as a personal assistant.

Is the vaccination safe and effective?

Since every vaccine in Switzerland must be authorised, it has to meet stringent safety, efficacy and quality requirements. Swissmedic, the Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products, has carefully assessed and authorised the mRNA vaccines against COVID-19.

They are safe and effective. 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 billions of people have received these vaccines. Experts will continue to monitor the safety and efficacy of the vaccines. The benefits of a vaccine must significantly outweigh the risks. Only then will the vaccine be recommended in Switzerland.

¹ You can find the detailed list of conditions here: *List of people at especially high risk (PDF, 160 kB)*

**Where 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) where you can be vaccinated, or ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Can I get vaccinated if I am pregnant or planning to become pregnant?

We recommend COVID-19 vaccination with an mRNA vaccine before or during pregnancy.

Are you planning to become pregnant? Then get vaccinated as soon as possible. If you are already pregnant and did not get vaccinated before pregnancy, we recommended vaccination from 12 weeks of pregnancy (i. e. from the 2nd trimester). However, vaccination is generally also possible earlier in the pregnancy.

If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant and have questions about the vaccination, talk to your doctor or midwife.

Which vaccine is recommended for whom?

We recommend vaccination with an mRNA vaccine for everyone aged 12 and over. These vaccines offer optimal protection against COVID-19 and its potential effects. For those under 30 years of age, the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is preferably recommended. Only Pfizer/BioNTech's vaccine for children is recommended for vaccinating children from age 5 to 11.

Those aged 18 or over who are unable to receive an mRNA vaccine for medical reasons, or who oppose mRNA vaccines, can also be vaccinated with the Janssen viral vector vaccine.

Caution: pregnant and breastfeeding women and people with a weakened immune system should ideally be vaccinated with an mRNA vaccine.

Who should not be vaccinated?

We do not recommend the COVID-19 vaccination with an mRNA vaccine for the following:

- People with a severe, confirmed allergy to an ingredient of the vaccines, particularly polyethylene glycol (PEG) or tromethamine (TRIS). Please seek advice from an allergist.²
- Children under the age of 5. So far not enough data is available on vaccination in this age group.

Where can I find further information?

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

² However, people who cannot receive an mRNA vaccine for medical reasons may, in consultation with their doctor, be able to be vaccinated with the Janssen viral vector vaccine.

