Information about COVID-19 vaccination

COVID-19 can cause serious complications.

COVID-19 has usually mild effects on children and young adults. However, sometimes severe cases needing hospitalization and sometimes prolonged intensive medical treatment can occur. This mainly affects people 65 and older or adults with risk factors such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, chronic heart or lung disease, cancer, immunosuppressive treatment, etc.

How to protect yourself from COVID-19 ?

Protective measures such as hand hygiene, wearing masks, and keeping your distance have proven effective, but unfortunately are not sufficient to protect yourself from the virus. Thanks to enormous research efforts, highly effective vaccines against COVID-19 have finally been developed: studies have shown that 95 out of 100 vaccinated persons were completely protected against disease. The remaining 5 individuals developed COVID-19 with mild symptoms that did not require hospitalization. Thus, vaccination is the most effective measure against COVID-19 and against its severe and/or protracted complications.

To whom is COVID-19 vaccination recommended ?

Initially, vaccination is recommended to all persons over the age of 65 (at the very beginning >75 years) and regardless of age to all adults with one or more risk factors. In the next stage, medical caregivers and close contacts of the first-mentioned persons as well as other adults can then be protected.

What types of vaccine are available ?

Switzerland has chosen to offer the most effective vaccines to the population, namely the " messenger RNA vaccines ". These are the vaccines developed by the pharmaceutical companies Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna.

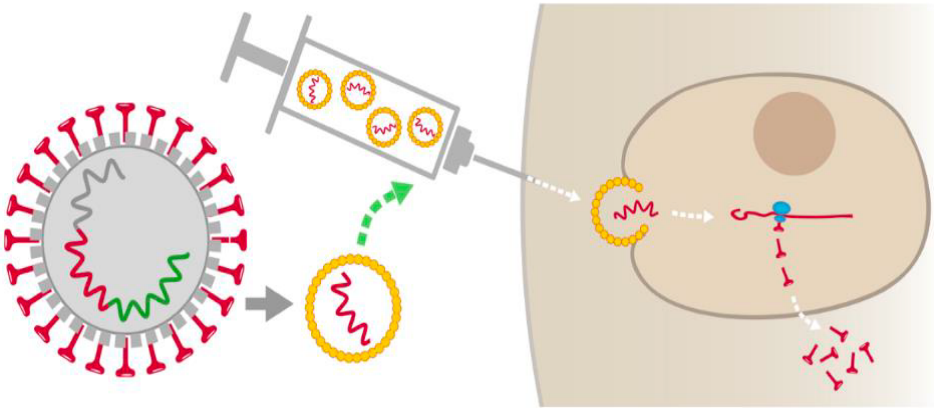
What is contained in a messenger RNA vaccine ?

A messenger RNA is a small piece of the genetic code needed to produce one or more viral proteins. In the case of the coronavirus vaccine, the messenger RNA contains only the information needed to produce the spike-shaped surface proteins of the coronavirus. Thus, vaccination

cannot cause COVID-19. The messenger RNA is enclosed in tiny fat globules so that it can be injected into the body. The vaccines do not contain any boosters/adjuvants (aluminum or other).

How does a messenger RNA vaccine work ?

Once injected into the body, the fat globules are " swallowed " by the surrounding cells. These cells read the RNA code contained in the globules and then start producing the surface proteins of the virus for about 2 days. These surface proteins of the virus are recognized by our immune system. The immune system then starts producing antibodies and specialized white blood cells against the surface proteins. Thus, the coronavirus is quickly recognized in case of infection.



How long does it take after the vaccination until I am protected ?

The vaccination consists of 2 injections (in the arm) at an interval of 3 - 4 weeks. Protection against COVID- 19 begins approximately 2 weeks after the first dose and is complete (95%) one week after the 2nd dose.

Do I need to protect myself against coronavirus after vaccination ?

Yes, you do! It is not yet known whether the vaccination only protects against the disease or whether it can also prevent infecting other people. Therefore, the hygiene measures, keeping distance and wearing masks must remain recommended for the time being, even for vaccinated persons.

How long does the vaccination protection last ?

It is not yet known whether the protection lasts for few months or for few years. Therefore, it cannot be excluded that a booster vaccination will be necessary after a certain period of time.

What are the side effects of the vaccine ?

These vaccines are currently administered to several million people worldwide. Some of those vaccinated have experienced side effects on the day of vaccination or in the following 1-2 days.
- Pain at the vaccination site.
- Fatigue, tiredness, headache, muscle or joint pain, chills, fever.

Symptoms are usually mild, but in rare cases they may be pronounced. After 1 to 3 days the symptoms are over, paracetamol can be taken if necessary for pain relief.

What are the risks of these new vaccines ?

The only known serious risk is an allergic reaction, which can occur in people who have had previous allergic reactions to vaccination or to any of the components of the new vaccines. Fortunately, however, an allergic reaction can be easily treated.
The messenger RNA from the vaccines cannot change our genetic material because it is protected in the cell nucleus and the RNA cannot enter the cell nucleus. It is therefore not a gene therapy. Other, as yet unknown (and therefore very rare) risks cannot be ruled out - but they are minimal compared to the risks of COVID-19 for people 65 and older or with certain pre-existing conditions. These risks are also less than the risks of longer-lasting symptoms sometimes observed after mild COVID-19.

For whom is the vaccination contraindicated ?

At the moment there is only one contraindication : pregnancy (due to lack of data). If there is an acute illness (fever, etc.) the vaccination should be postponed. If you have previously had an allergic reaction to a vaccination or any component of the vaccines, you should contact your doctor.
If you have recently been ill with COVID-19, vaccination is possible, but it is also possible to wait until 3 months after the illness before vaccination. Antibody testing prior to vaccination is not helpful.
Chronic diseases or taking medications are not contraindications for vaccination. Immunodeficiency or immunosuppressive treatment may potentially reduce the effectiveness of vaccination. Due to lack of data and because they are unlikely to become severely ill, children and adolescents under 16 years of age are not vaccinated.

How much does vaccination against COVID-19 cost ?

The vaccination against COVID-19 is free of charge for the population: health insurances (without franchise share), cantons and the Confederation jointly bear the costs.

Who recommends me this vaccination ?

The vaccination is recommended to you by the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), by the Federal Commission for Vaccination Questions (EKIF), by the cantonal doctor and by the medical societies.
In any case, vaccination is voluntary, there is no compulsory.

If you have any doubts or questions, contact your doctor now for advice.

More information : www.infovac.ch "Coronavirus"