



Booster vaccination with an mRNA vaccine (Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna)

The mRNA vaccines provide very effective protection against severe cases of COVID-19 requiring hospital admission. However, in people aged 65 and over, it appears that the protection afforded by the vaccination can decline over time. For these individuals we recommend a booster vaccination 6 months after completing the primary vaccination course. To date, no reduction in vaccine protection against severe illness has been observed in people aged under 65. This also applies to persons in this age group who are at especially high risk and have chronic illnesses. Therefore, a booster vaccination is not currently generally recommended for those aged under 65.

What does a booster do?

The booster reminds the immune system of the pathogen. It restores and extends maximum vaccine protection.

For whom is the booster vaccination recommended?

To provide the best possible protection against severe COVID-19 requiring hospital admission, the booster vaccination is recommended for:

- People aged 65 and over (especially those aged 75 and over, or those aged 65 and over with chronic illnesses who are at the highest risk¹ of contracting severe COVID-19);
- Residents of retirement homes, care homes and day-care facilities for senior citizens.

For whom is the booster vaccination recommended under certain conditions?

Although the booster vaccination is not generally recommended for the following people, it can be recommended in individual cases on request and after an assessment by the treating doctor:

- Vulnerable persons aged under 65 with chronic illnesses with the highest risk¹ of contracting severe COVID-19.

For whom is a booster vaccination not generally recommended, but may be considered in individual cases?

In individual cases, a booster vaccination can be administered to the following people on request and after a risk-benefit analysis by the treating doctor:

- Healthcare professionals in specific work situations in especially exposed areas (e.g. COVID-19 wards, intensive care units, retirement homes or care homes for senior citizens).

When should the booster vaccination be given?

A booster vaccination can be administered at the earliest 6 months after completion of the primary vaccination course with an mRNA vaccine. Completion of the primary vaccination course exists after

- two doses of an mRNA vaccine; or

- confirmed infection with the coronavirus + one dose of an mRNA vaccine at least 4 weeks apart (regardless of the order).

If an infection with the coronavirus has been confirmed after the completion of the primary vaccination course, the following applies:

- If the infection occurred within 6 months after the primary vaccination course, a booster is recommended six months after this infection.
- If the infection occurred more than 6 months after the completion of the primary vaccination course, no further vaccination is necessary.

What dose of what vaccine is administered during the booster vaccination?

As a rule, the same vaccine used for the primary vaccination course should also be used, if possible, for the booster vaccination. If this is not available, the other respective mRNA vaccine can also be used. If different mRNA vaccines were used for the primary vaccination course, the booster vaccination can be administered with either of the two vaccines.

For the vaccine from Pfizer/BioNTech, the same dosage used for the primary vaccination course is also administered for the booster vaccination. If the vaccine from Moderna was used initially, half the dosage is administered for the booster vaccination.

Where can I be vaccinated?

The cantons are responsible for vaccination. Find out where you can register and get vaccinated on the website or infoline of your canton (www.foph-coronavirus.ch/cantons) or ask your doctor or pharmacist.

The rest of the information relating to the booster vaccination is the same as that for the primary vaccination course and is provided on the information sheet "General information on the COVID-19 vaccination with an mRNA vaccine".

¹ Table 2, p.11 of the mRNA vaccination recommendation: *Disease definitions for people with chronic illnesses with the highest risk*

