



## 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 4 months after completing the primary vaccination course. So far, it is unclear whether the protection against severe disease decreases in those aged under 65 and for new virus variants. However, protection from mild cases and transmission of the virus declines over time for everybody. This can occur more or less quickly, depending on the variant. For this reason we also recommend everyone from age 16 to 64 to have a booster vaccination.

### What does a booster do?

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

### For whom is the booster vaccination recommended?

To provide the best possible protection against severe case of COVID-19 and hospitalisation, a booster is recommended for everyone age 65 and over, and in particular for:

- Those aged 75 and over;
- Those aged 65 and over with chronic diseases that put them at the highest risk<sup>1</sup> of getting a severe case of COVID-19;
- Residents and people being looked after in nursing homes, care homes and day care facilities for older people.

The booster can help increase protection against infection and mild disease and the consequences (e.g. the long-term effects of COVID-19 and incapacity for work) in people under 65 and temporarily reduce the spread of the virus. For this reason the booster vaccination is also recommended for everyone from age 16 to 64, in particular for:

- People aged under 65 with chronic diseases with the highest risk<sup>1</sup> of suffering a severe case of COVID-19;
- Residents and persons under 65 years of age in retirement homes, care homes and day-care facilities for senior citizens;
- Healthcare personnel with direct patient contact and carers for people at especially high risk.

The booster vaccination is also recommended for pregnant women from the third trimester onwards and for breastfeeding women.

### When should the booster vaccination be given?

A booster vaccination is recommended from 4 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 4 months after the primary vaccination course, a booster is recommended 4 months after this infection.
- If the infection occurred more than 4 months after the completion of the primary vaccination course, there is usually no current need for a booster vaccination.

### 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. As for the primary vaccination, the recommendation is for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine to be favoured for vaccinating those under 30.

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](http://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".**

<sup>1</sup> Table 2, p. 11 of the mRNA vaccination recommendation: *definitions of diseases for people with the highest-risk chronic illnesses*

