



Gesundheits-, Sozial- und Integrationsdirektion
Gesundheitsamt
Kantonsärztlicher Dienst

Directorate of Health, Social Services and
Integration
Department of Health
Cantonal Medical Service

Recommended Vaccinations

**Vaccinations recommended for school-aged children and young people
(Pre-school – secondary level)**

Age	Vaccinations
4–7 years	- Polio, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough
*≥ 6 years	- *Tick-borne encephalitis (TBEV/FSME)
	Catch-up vaccinations: - Measles, mumps, rubella
11–15 years	- Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough - Hepatitis B (2 or 3 doses) - Bacterial meningitis (meningococcal infections) - Human papillomavirus (cervical cancer, genital warts) (2 or 3 doses)
	Catch-up vaccinations: - Polio - Measles, mumps, rubella - TBEV/FSME

If your child is between the ages of 11 and 15 and has not had chickenpox (varicella), you should speak with your GP about a possible vaccination against this infectious disease.

Please bear in mind the following general contraindications for vaccination:

- **anaphylactic reaction in the past (=most severe allergic reaction)**
- **pregnancy**
- **immunodeficiency**
- **acute, serious illness**

Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough

Diphtheria

The first symptom of diphtheria is usually a sore

throat. Coatings that form in the nose and throat interfere with the flow of air, making it difficult or impossible to breathe.

Thanks to vaccinations, typical diphtheria illnesses no longer occur in Switzerland. The bacteria that causes diphtheria is still present, though, meaning that non-vaccinated children can still become infected and fall seriously ill.

Tetanus (lockjaw)

Tetanus is caused by a bacterium found in soil and in human and animal digestive tracts. The bacteria enter the body through an injury (primarily cuts, puncture wounds or burns). The bacteria release a toxin that affects the nervous system, triggering extremely painful muscle contractions.

Whooping cough (pertussis)

This highly contagious bacterial infection can be associated with coughing spells, gasping for breath and vomiting of mucus and food. The illness normally lasts for several weeks. In infants, it can cause complications like pneumonia and cramps and can even result in lasting brain damage. The illness is fatal in one out of 100 infants who contract it. It only rarely causes serious complications in adults. It is often the parents who unknowingly transmit the bacteria that cause whooping cough to their infants and children.

Polio (poliomyelitis)

The polio virus destroys cells of the nervous system, causing paralysis in different parts of the body. The muscles used for breathing can also be affected, making artificial respiration necessary. The limbs affected often remain weakened or paralysed for life.

Polio has been virtually eradicated in Switzerland since 1983, thanks to the good vaccination discipline in the population. To maintain this level of

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protection, the vaccination of all children should continue.

Measles, mumps, rubella

These three viral illnesses can lead to serious complications:

Measles Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain)

Mumps Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), orchitis (inflammation of the testicles)

Rubella When infection occurs during the first three months of pregnancy, rubella can harm the unborn child.

Often erroneously regarded as harmless, measles, mumps and rubella are highly contagious viral diseases for which there is no specific treatment. They can lead to serious complications that may result in lasting physical and psychological damage or, in rare cases, death. Vaccination is the only effective means of protecting against these diseases.

Hepatitis B

This viral infection attacks the liver. Jaundice is the typical symptom. Infections often go unnoticed though, or may only cause symptoms that are not very distinctive (stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, etc.). Acute hepatitis B infections are rarely fatal. The majority of infected persons recover with no long-term effects. In about 5–10% of cases, though, the infection becomes chronic, i.e. the virus remains in the body. These persons can continue to spread the virus throughout their lifetimes and, after years or decades, develop cirrhosis or liver cancer.

Hepatitis B is transmitted by blood or through sexual contact.

Bacterial meningitis (meningococcal infections)

About 15% of the population host meningococcal bacteria in their upper respiratory systems without becoming ill. These bacteria can cause serious illnesses though, if they make it past the mucous membrane and enter the bloodstream. Purulent meningitis and blood poisoning are among the most feared of these illnesses. Meningococcal infections are frequently associated with complications. Once vaccinated, your child will have the optimal protection against illnesses caused by the meningococcal bacteria of groups A, C, W and Y (against all groups except B).

Tick-borne encephalitis (TBEV/FSME)

Ticks picked up while outdoors in nature can transmit a variety of pathogens and thus cause a variety of illnesses. The two most significant of these are Lyme disease (Lyme borreliosis) and tick-borne encephalitis (TBEV/FSME).

While the former can be treated with antibiotics, there is no specific treatment for TBEV. Aside from general precautions to protect oneself against ticks (e.g. long sleeves and trousers), vaccination against TBEV is the only practicable solution for persons seeking effective protection against this disease.

Cervical cancer and genital warts

There are about forty different types of human papillomaviruses (HPV) that can be transmitted from one person to another during sexual intercourse via contact with skin or mucous membranes. In most cases, infections do not give rise to any health complaints, so people remain unaware that they have been infected and thus may unknowingly transmit HPV to others.

Some types of HPV can cause cancer (e.g. cancers of the cervix or anus) or genital warts. Because cervical cancers, particularly their preliminary stages, are quite common and the disease is very serious, general vaccination of all girls against HPV is recommended.

Cancers caused by HPV are less common in men, but men are just as likely to suffer from genital warts. For this reason, HPV vaccination is recommended as a supplementary vaccination for all teenage boys and young men.

Complications associated with vaccination

It is very rare for serious complications to arise in connection with the vaccinations described here. Any vaccination can, in very rare cases, trigger a serious allergic reaction. The vaccine against measles, mumps, rubella is a live vaccine and can, in extremely rare cases, cause neuritis or encephalitis. These complications are far more likely to appear in connection with the illnesses themselves though (measles infections cause encephalitis in about 1 case out of a thousand)

However, the milder side effects listed below are common or appear occasionally (depending on the vaccine used):

- Swelling, soreness, redness in the area where the needle enters the skin
- Headaches, dizziness, fatigue
- Muscle/joint pain
- Nausea, vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms