

# Coronavirus vaccination – effective and safe!

The coronavirus vaccination protects against severe COVID-19 disease and minimises long-term effects. The Standing Commission on Vaccination (STIKO) has simplified the recommendations based on the experience from recent years. This leaflet contains important information about the current recommendations for the coronavirus vaccination.

Last updated: 02.11.2023, based on the COVID-19 vaccination recommendations from STIKO on 25.05.2023

## How can I get well protected against the coronavirus?

Long-term protection against the coronavirus develops after several vaccinations or infections.

According to STIKO, **basic immunity** provides protection against severe COVID-19 disease and minimises long-term effects. Basic immunity is achieved by coming into contact at least **3 times** with components of the coronavirus. Such contact can be **coronavirus vaccinations or coronavirus infections**. For the best possible basic immunity, the contact in 2 out of the 3 cases should be through vaccinations.

However, it is important that there is an **adequate gap** between the contact in these cases. If the gaps are too short, then the immune system may not have sufficient time to build up longer-term protection. Therefore, if the gaps are too short, an infection does not replace a vaccination.

**Infection** with the coronavirus can replace **one** of the recommended vaccinations. In this case, the gap between the previous and subsequent vaccination must be **at least 3 months**.

Basic immunity is also recommended in certain cases for **children from 6 months of age and for adolescents**. Basic immunity for children and adolescents is recommended if they

- Have certain pre-existing diseases
- Are looked after in a care home or
- Are close contacts (e.g. family members) of people whose immune system is unlikely to provide adequate protection after the vaccination.



**Further information on vaccination recommendations can be found here:**

[www.rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/ImpfungenAZ/COVID-19/Impfempfehlung-Zusfassung.html](http://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/ImpfungenAZ/COVID-19/Impfempfehlung-Zusfassung.html)



**You can find further information here:**

[www.infektionsschutz.de/coronavirus/schutzimpfung/impfung-gegen-covid-19/](http://www.infektionsschutz.de/coronavirus/schutzimpfung/impfung-gegen-covid-19/)



### TIP

The [coronavirus vaccination check](#) calculates for you whether the gaps in your case are sufficient for basic immunity and whether you may need a vaccination.

## Is basic immunity recommended for me?

STIKO recommends basic immunity for **everyone aged 18 or over**. For basic immunity, **2 vaccinations** are initially recommended **at least 3 weeks** apart. In addition, a **booster vaccination is recommended at least 6 months** after the 2nd vaccination.

## Are further booster vaccinations recommended for me?

In addition to the basic immunity, some people are recommended to have an annual booster vaccination:

- In the case of a higher **risk of infection**: This applies to residents in **nursing/care homes** or people working in nursing/care homes or medical facilities with **direct patient contact**
- If there is a **risk of getting a severe case of COVID-19** from the age of 60 or due to certain underlying medical conditions



**Do you have adequate vaccine protection?**  
You can check here:



[www.infektionsschutz.de/coronavirus/schutzimpfung/der-corona-impfcheck](http://www.infektionsschutz.de/coronavirus/schutzimpfung/der-corona-impfcheck)

- As **close contacts of people with a weak immune system** (e.g. family members) whose immune system is unlikely to provide adequate protection after the vaccination.

These groups of people should have the [booster vaccination](#) every year or at least 12 months apart from the last vaccination or a coronavirus infection. The booster vaccination should preferably be given in the autumn because it is assumed that in autumn and winter the risk of infection is higher than in the warmer months.

Booster vaccinations should preferably be given with [mRNA vaccines](#) adapted to the latest coronavirus variants.

Booster vaccinations against the flu are available again in the autumn. A COVID-19 vaccination and flu vaccination can usually be given at the same appointment. The vaccinations can generally be given in two different arms.



**You can find information on the flu vaccination here:**

[www.impfen-info.de/grippeimpfung](http://www.impfen-info.de/grippeimpfung)



## Is the coronavirus vaccination recommended for healthy children and adolescents?

**No**, for healthy [children and adolescents under the age of 18](#), STIKO does **not** usually recommend a coronavirus vaccination. Children and adolescents without any pre-existing medical conditions have usually suffered a mild case of the disease and very rarely had to go into hospital for this reason. Therefore, STIKO no longer recommends the coronavirus vaccination for these children and adolescents.

The coronavirus vaccination is recommended only in certain cases for children from 6 months of age and for adolescents. These include, for example, [certain pre-existing medical conditions](#).

## What vaccines are recommended?

Various vaccines are authorised in the European Union for the coronavirus vaccination. The following vaccines are recommended in Germany:

- **mRNA vaccines:** Comirnaty® from BioNTech/Pfizer and Spikevax® from Moderna
- **Vector vaccines:** Vaxzevria® from AstraZeneca and Jcovden® from Janssen-Cilag International
- **Protein vaccines:** Nuvaxovid® from Novavax
- **Whole virus vaccines:** Valneva® COVID-19 vaccine from Valneva

These [COVID-19 vaccines](#) may be available in different dosages and are recommended for different age groups.

## What vaccine reactions can occur?

The vaccines are generally **well tolerated**. They can lead to normal vaccination reactions, such as pain at the injection site, fatigue, headache or even fever. The symptoms usually disappear again after a few days. Severe [side effects](#) are **very rare**.

### TIP

Further information on the safety of vaccines can be found at [impfen-info.de](http://impfen-info.de).

## Where can I get vaccinated?

You can get vaccinated in medical practices, at company doctors and in pharmacies. Vaccination is free of charge.

## Why are hygiene rules still important?

Coronavirus vaccination provides good protection against severe COVID-19. However, it cannot provide full protection.

Certain [behavioural measures](#), such as hand washing and wearing a mask, can help to protect against the coronavirus and other respiratory infections.

## Further information

🔗 Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA): [www.infektionsschutz.de/coronavirus/schutzimpfung/](http://www.infektionsschutz.de/coronavirus/schutzimpfung/)

🔗 Federal Ministry of Health: [www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/coronavirus/](http://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/coronavirus/)

🔗 Robert Koch Institute: [www.rki.de/SharedDocs/FAQ/COVID-Impfen/gesamt.html](http://www.rki.de/SharedDocs/FAQ/COVID-Impfen/gesamt.html)