

Zurich, 7 September 2021

Call from the Swiss School of Public Health: get vaccinated!

At the beginning of September 2021, more than eight months after the COVID-19 vaccines were licensed, 57.6% of the Swiss population has received at least one dose of the vaccine and just over half of the population is fully vaccinated. In terms of vaccination coverage, Switzerland lags behind in Western Europe; it is far behind Portugal (84%), Spain (78%), France (72%), Italy (71%) and Germany (65%) and is only ahead of Bulgaria (33%) and Romania (27%).

Due to insufficient vaccination coverage, Switzerland was in a very dangerous situation at the beginning of the 2021 school year. The return from holidays, the resumption of social interactions in companies, schools and universities, and the increased use of public transport can greatly foster the spread of the coronavirus. This was already observed at the same time last year and the circumstances even more risky now that the delta variant has become prevalent in the country.

An effective and safe vaccine is now available. It has been administered more than five billion times, an unparalleled achievement in human history. All spotlights are on these vaccines and they have been shown to be very well tolerated. The latest Israeli data confirm the very high efficacy of mRNA vaccines- even against the delta variant in terms of risk of complications leading to hospitalisation (vaccine efficacy of 85% in people over 50 and 92% in people under 50).

The vaccines do not guarantee that the coronavirus cannot be transmitted. Epidemics have spread again in Israel and the United Kingdom, although the vaccination coverage rate is higher in these countries than in Switzerland. However, the vaccine significantly reduces the risk of transmission and complications of COVID-19, which can be very serious. There are still people who die after a painful hospital stay just because they have not been vaccinated. We need to get vaccinated to reduce this risk.

Some countries such as the United States, Russia and some outermost European regions such as the French overseas territories, which like Switzerland have inadequate vaccination coverage, have experienced devastating epidemics this summer, resulting in overcrowded hospitals, numerous deaths and the shut down of social and economic life. Let us preserve our health, our way of life in Switzerland and our health system that guarantees access to care for all. Let us also protect our country's economy and the continuity of education in our schools and universities.

Let's get vaccinated, vaccinate yourself!

If you have questions about vaccination or are not sure how to get vaccinated, the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) and the Federal Commission on Immunisation (FCI) are available to help. Please follow this [link](#). There you will also find the forwarding to the cantonal competent authorities.

Contact

Antoine Flahault, Deputy Director SSPH+, antoine.flahault@unige.ch

About SSPH+

The Swiss School of Public Health (SSPH+) is a non-profit foundation supported by 12 Swiss universities and gathers public health scientists from all over Switzerland in a national inter-university faculty. The expertise of the SSPH+ faculty reflects the scientific as well as practice-oriented field of Public Health, which encompasses a broad spectrum of disciplines, spread across universities, faculties and institutes. For questions about SSPH+: Nino Künzli, Director SSPH+, nkuenzli@ssphplus.ch, www.ssphplus.ch