

# Frequently asked questions about Covid-19

Version: Autumn 2023 and early 2024

*Isn't the epidemic gradually over? Shouldn't we just let everything happen? Anyone who gets Covid is hardly sick from it, right?*



A "small wave" is predicted at the end of 2023. There are fewer serious illnesses and deaths than in the first waves, but there are still cases every day. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that there are as few cases as possible; then the infection will not reach weakened people.

## *Why a vaccine against new forms of Covid?*

The virus is constantly changing. It is known that the effectiveness of the previous injections decreases. Scientists and the pharmaceutical industry are constantly working on a new composition for everyone, to maintain our resistance. It became available in September 2023. You can get it from your GP and or from your pharmacist ("apotheek"). The syringe is free. Consultation is largely paid for by the health insurance company, as usual.

It is best to receive this syringe (1x) in September or October. No repetition is necessary after 6 months.

Combination with the flu vaccine may be done on the same day. You must get the flu vaccine from the pharmacist.

## *Who needs this new vaccine?*

The vaccine is certainly recommended for:

- everyone from 65 years old
- in pregnant women
- in people who are seriously overweight (BMI 40+),
- in chronic illness (e.g. heart disease, chronic bronchitis, severe asthma, etc.)
- in smokers
- AND WITH HOUSEMATES of these people.

It is also planned for people staying in facilities and for (para)medical staff. In children and anyone under 65, it is only necessary for chronic diseases and for those who have already had pneumonia.

The effectiveness of previous vaccines against Covid has already been severely weakened and that is why the groups mentioned really need the new shot.

## *I have a positive Covid 19 self-test, what now?*

- A PCR is only necessary in case of weakened immunity. This can be done at the doctor (or practice nurse) or pharmacy.
- People with a positive result AND with complaints stay at home for that period. Limit your contacts, especially with people with chronic diseases and their housemates. When

in doubt, it is best to wear a mask. This ends when you no longer have symptoms. It is best to take another self-test: if it is negative, you may no longer be contagious. Make sure you have good hand hygiene... If you still have symptoms, or if you still have a positive self-test, it is best to extend your self-isolation (until a negative self-test).

#### *What about the face mask requirement?*

Wearing a mouth mask is no longer mandatory. It is useful when you cough. When the epidemic increases in autumn and winter, this can be introduced again, for example:

- for medically vulnerable people and their contacts
- in places where many people gather (possibly also on public transport and when traveling)

#### *I have been vaccinated and still got Covid, why is that?*

Vaccines do not protect against getting Covid, but they do protect against its worsening into the most severe forms. The scientists do their best, but they can only learn from progressive insight into what is happening (and what new studies about that teach). The pharmaceutical industry had a record speed in making vaccines, was able to elicit antibodies, but also had to determine that they were not enough to prevent the disease (unlike vaccines for example against measles, mumps, rubella). They continue to work on "better".

#### *Is vaccination required to travel?*

At the moment it is not mandatory. At any time, any country could become stricter again, depending on the severity of the wave of infections.

#### *Any questions ?*

Feel free to ask your doctor or nurse. [www.MediKwatrecht.be](http://www.MediKwatrecht.be)  
<https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/>