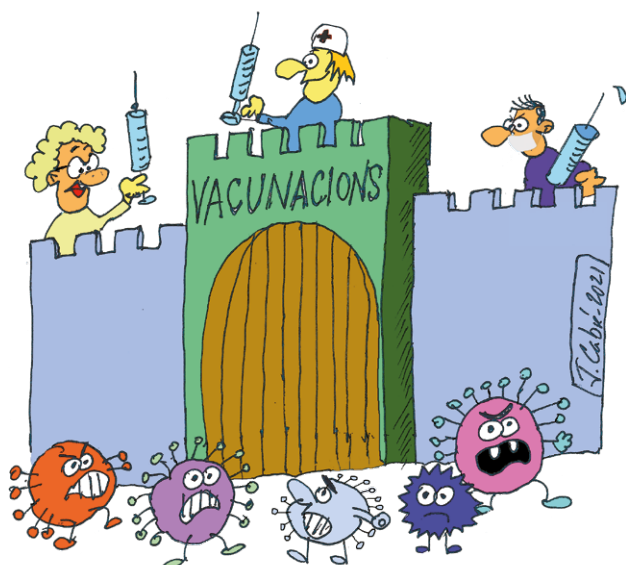


# Vaccines

## Why is vaccination so important?

After water purification, vaccination is the measure that has most contributed to preventing infectious diseases. It is a simple and effective way of protecting people against them. At present, vaccines are available to provide protection against over twenty diseases.



## How do vaccines work?

They enable your body to recognise the invading germ, to create antibodies against it and to remember the disease and how to fight it. After you are vaccinated, your immune system produces antibodies, as if you had been exposed to the disease itself, but without having to catch it, and so you are protected against infection.

## Are vaccines safe?

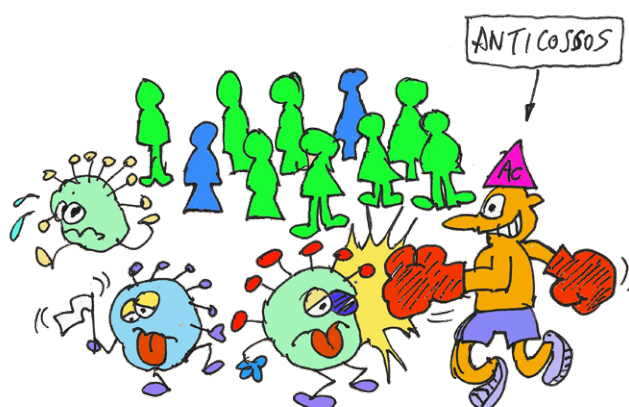
Yes, vaccines are rigorously tested to ensure their effectiveness and safety. The regulatory bodies are particularly strict and monitor them constantly to ensure that they are safe. The authorities and the general public only accept vaccines that cause minimal discomfort and adverse reactions.

Side effects are normally mild and short-lived (pain or redness at the injection site, a slight fever...).

Serious side effects are extremely rare. You are far more likely to be seriously harmed by a vaccine-preventable disease than by its vaccine.

## How do vaccines protect the community?

When you are vaccinated, you protect both yourself and those around you. The more people are vaccinated, the more the transmission of the infection from one person to another is prevented. This is why, by getting vaccinated, you also protect those that can't be vaccinated, perhaps because they have illnesses that weaken their defences, or they take certain medicines, etc. This is how "herd immunity" is achieved.



## Vaccination programme

The governments of each country, with the support of the scientific authorities, decide which vaccines are recommended for the population.

In our case, the Department of Health establishes the [vaccination programme](#) for the population of Catalonia and updates it regularly in accordance with scientific evidence. The programme specifies which vaccines are recommended, how many doses, at what age and which diseases the population should be protected against. The routine vaccines in Catalonia's vaccination programme are free of charge.

In addition to the routine vaccines, when you travel, depending on your destination, you may need to have other vaccines, in accordance with the World Health Organisation guidelines for [international](#) travellers.