Making a life-course approach to vaccination a public health priority

Vaccination is a pillar of public health: along with nutrition and physical activity, it has a key role in strengthening our ability to fight infection and remain healthy and productive throughout life.

Societal benefits

Economic benefits

A life-course approach to vaccination can reduce hospitalisations and healthcare costs while enhancing productivity.1,2

In OECD countries <0.1% of health budgets spent on vaccination.7

Many vaccines are undervalued or under-utilised.

Vaccination prevents serious diseases. Vaccination against HPV can protect against at least 70% of cervical cancers.5

Vaccination is cost-effective. It costs less than €4,000 to protect someone against 17 different infectious diseases for their entire life.8

Vaccination protects people with chronic conditions from infection and further complications.

In Europe, measles cases rose 3 times in 2016-2017.

Stopping the spread of infection lowers the unnecessary use of antibiotics.

Antimicrobial resistance causes 25,000 deaths in Europe each year.11

Vaccination can reduce illness and death, even among those not vaccinated (herd immunity).

Meningococcal C vaccination: 93% reduction of meningitis C among unvaccinated groups.9

Vaccination protects people with heart disease: 50% reduction of fatal heart attacks.3

Adults with diabetes or chronic heart disease are up to 4x more likely to get pneumococcal disease than healthy adults.4

Flu vaccination for people with heart disease: 50% reduction of fatal heart attacks.3

Encouraging effective vaccination throughout life: How can you help?

• Prioritise vaccine-preventable disease in national health policies – and work towards a common European strategy.
• Initiate public awareness campaigns to educate people of the importance of getting vaccinated across their entire lives, not just as children.
• Widen access to vaccination in non-healthcare settings, especially schools and workplaces.
• Engage the scientific community to generate evidence and support the strengthening of effective immunisation information systems to monitor vaccination coverage rates across all life stages.
• Provide the guidelines, training, tools and skills to equip healthcare professionals, including pharmacists, to discuss the benefits of a life-course approach with patients.


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