



## Commission recommends new measures on vaccine-preventable cancers under Europe's Beating Cancer Plan

Brussels, 31 January 2024

Today, the European Commission is putting forward a **Recommendation to support Member States in their efforts to prevent cancer through vaccination**. Notably, it focuses on **boosting the uptake of two key vaccinations** that can **prevent viral infections that may lead to cancer**: against Human papillomaviruses (HPV) and Hepatitis B virus (HBV), as well as improving the monitoring of coverage rates.

The Recommendation is part of **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, a key pillar of the European Health Union**. It is estimated that about **40% of cancer cases in the EU are preventable**. However, according to a new [report](#) published today, only around 5% of total health spending was dedicated to prevention in the EU Member States in 2021.

### Vaccine-preventable cancers

To eliminate cervical cancer and other cancers caused by HPV, such as certain head and neck cancers and other anogenital cancers, Europe's Beating Cancer Plan has set a **target** for Member States to reach **HPV vaccination rates of 90% for girls** and to significantly **increase the vaccination of boys by 2030**. The Cancer Plan also aims to ensure access and **increased uptake of the HBV vaccination**, notably to prevent liver cancer. These vaccines are vital for protecting public health and supporting resilient health systems.

However, there is still a long way to go in reaching these objectives. Many Member States are well below 50% HPV vaccination coverage for girls with limited data available for boys and young adults, and there is a significant lack of data on HBV vaccination rates.

Today's Recommendation includes a series of measures that Member States could take to improve the uptake of these life-saving vaccines. These include:

- Providing **vaccination free of charge and/or fully reimbursed**;
- Ensuring that vaccination is **easily accessible**, particularly to the targeted groups and vulnerable or high-risk populations;
- Integrating vaccine-preventable cancer immunisation into their **national cancer plans**;
- Strengthening **communication efforts**, particularly by highlighting the benefits of vaccination to parents, young people and target groups and addressing mis- and disinformation;
- Improving **monitoring and reporting** of vaccination coverage, to identify where gaps may need to be addressed;
- Setting a **concrete target for HPV vaccination for boys**;
- Specifically for HBV, strengthen national efforts to reach the **2030 targets set by WHO**:
  - 95 % vaccination coverage (3rd dose) of childhood HBV vaccination;
  - 95 % of pregnant women screened for hepatitis B;
  - 95 % of newborns who received timely (within 24 hours of birth) HBV birth-dose vaccination, including by strengthening systems for the monitoring of progress towards those targets and by making use of available support from ECDC if needed.
- Putting **strong electronic vaccination registries** in place;
- **Exchanging best practices** with other Member States to improve national efforts.

The Commission will also provide **support to Member States in implementing the Recommendation**. In particular, it will provide a model for **communication** campaigns, adaptable to national needs and taking into account national specificities, to help raise awareness of the importance of these vaccinations. The Commission will also assist in the work to **improve monitoring across the EU**, while the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

will develop a new dashboard of national vaccination rates for HPV and HBV by the end of 2024, to provide a better overview of the situation.

In parallel, the EU4Health programme continues to provide significant **financial support** to Member States in their efforts to boost vaccination and combat cancer. A Joint Action will be launched in 2024 to support Member States to increase HPV vaccination as well as to address communicable diseases such as Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS, funded with €20 million from the EU budget.

### For More Information

[Proposal for a Council recommendation on vaccine-preventable cancers](#)

[Factsheet "Europe's Beating Cancer Plan: Making a difference"](#)

[Europe's Beating Cancer Plan](#)

[Factsheet on vaccination coverage](#)

[European Cancer Inequalities Registry](#)

[Data on cancer prevalence](#)

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### Quotes:

*"With Europe's Beating Cancer Plan we have taken a strong political commitment to improve the lives of all our fellow citizens touched by this disease. With today's proposal, the EU is delivering support to Member States to increase cancer prevention, with a particular focus on protecting children, young people and vulnerable populations. Prevention will always be the better way to fight cancer, and with 40% of cases being attributed to preventable causes, there is scope to make a difference."*  
Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life - 31/01/2024

*"Prevention is always better than cure. Every year in the EU, almost 14,000 lives are lost to cervical cancer and over 16,000 new Hepatitis B infections are reported. With safe and effective vaccines, we have a historic opportunity to eliminate cervical cancer and other cancers caused by these viruses. Today's proposal is a key part of our work on prevention under Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, a core pillar of a strong European Health Union that protects the health of our citizens, particularly our youth. The Commission stands ready to support Member States in every way possible to reduce the number of persons touched by cancer."*  
Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety - 31/01/2024

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### Related media

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