European Heart Network
Fighting heart disease and stroke

Vaccination as a Cardiovascular Prevention Measure

EHN Position Statement

Why this statement?

Cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death in Europe. Preventing cardiovascular disease requires sustained action to identify and reduce established risk factors, promote healthy lifestyles and ensure equitable access to prevention and care. Alongside these well-established approaches, growing scientific evidence and clinical consensus demonstrate that vaccination can also contribute to preventing cardiovascular complications by reducing the risk of vaccine-preventable infections that may trigger acute cardiovascular events. This includes, but is not limited to, infections such as influenza, COVID-19, pneumococcal disease, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and herpes zoster, in accordance with national recommendations.

Vaccination should therefore be recognised as an additional, evidence-based component of comprehensive cardiovascular disease prevention.

The European Heart Network (EHN) calls for vaccination to be fully integrated into cardiovascular prevention policy, clinical practice and patient care across Europe.

EHN calls for action

1. Integrate vaccination into cardiovascular prevention policy

Vaccination should be recognised alongside established preventive interventions as an important strategy to reduce cardiovascular complications among eligible people living with cardiovascular disease or at increased cardiovascular risk.

2. Embed vaccination into patient-centred cardiovascular care

People living with cardiovascular disease should be empowered to make informed decisions about vaccination through clear, accessible and

evidence-based information. Healthcare professionals across the continuum of care - including primary care, cardiology, hospitals, cardiac rehabilitation and community settings such as pharmacies - should routinely consider and discuss recommended vaccinations as part of comprehensive cardiovascular care, in accordance with national recommendations.

3. Equip healthcare professionals

Cardiologists and all healthcare professionals involved in cardiovascular care should be supported with the knowledge, tools and confidence to discuss vaccination and refer eligible patients appropriately.

4. Ensure equitable access

All eligible people living with cardiovascular disease should have timely, affordable and equitable access to recommended vaccinations, regardless of where they live or their socioeconomic conditions.

5. Strengthen implementation

While scientific evidence continues to evolve, greater attention should now focus on implementation: understanding barriers, improving uptake, monitoring vaccination coverage and integrating vaccination into routine cardiovascular practice across Europe.

Looking ahead

EHN will work with patient organisations, healthcare professionals, scientific societies and policymakers to raise awareness, support implementation and strengthen the integration of vaccination into cardiovascular prevention.

About this statement

This position statement was developed by the European Heart Network (EHN) with the support of its *Vaccination as a Cardiovascular Disease Prevention* Subgroup, established under the EHN Cardiovascular Health (CVH) Plan Working Group. The subgroup brings together experts from cardiovascular medicine, prevention and patient advocacy to support the integration of vaccination into comprehensive cardiovascular disease prevention.