
European Immunization Week 24-30 April 2025

"Vaccinations ensure prosperity for all"

Athens, 28 April 2025.- The European Immunization Week (24-30 April 2025) provides every year the opportunity for all countries to highlight the invaluable value of vaccination programmes in eliminating life-threatening diseases, improving quality of life and offer significant savings to health systems.

Vaccinations have been documented to protect health, well-being and productivity when applied consistently and with coherence.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), since 1974, vaccinations have saved at least 154 million lives.¹ In particular, 6 lives per minute, every day, for five decades. In addition, they offer significant savings to health systems as they return multiple times the original investment value.

In Greece, a recent study shows that the proper implementation of the Children-Adolescent vaccination program can avert on an annual basis almost 289,000 cases, 266 deaths and the loss of 7,470 years of life. In addition, its implementation was associated with annual savings of almost €213 million. Specifically, for every €1 invested in the pediatric LTD, €3.11 is saved in terms of direct costs and €8.67 in terms of total costs².

There are also significant benefits to vaccinating adults. According to data from the Office of Health Economics Report, vaccination against influenza, pneumococcus, shingles and RSV can return to society up to nineteen times their initial investment. This equates to savings of up to \$4,637 after a full vaccination of an adult³. Also, vaccinations offer invaluable protection against antimicrobial resistance⁴, in which Greece ranks among the countries facing a very acute problem^{5,6}.

The invaluable contribution of vaccines has been highlighted in the recent public health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, post-pandemic vaccination fatigue has led to a significant lag in vaccination coverage, which poses a significant risk of recurrence of "forgotten" diseases. It is worth mentioning the recent outbreaks of measles and whooping cough in many European

¹ World Immunization Week 2025. Available in: <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-immunization-week/2025>

² Public Health and Economic Impact of Pediatric Immunization Program in Greece. Cook C, Carrico J, Talbird S, Gountas I, Skroumpelos A, Boutselakou E, Trimis G, Sabale U, Bencina G. Public health and economic impact of pediatric immunization program in Greece. Presented at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the European Society for Paediatric Infectious Diseases (ESPID) 2024; May 24, 2024. Copenhagen, Denmark.

³ El Banhawi H., Chowdhury S., Neri M., Radu P., Besley S., Bell E., Brassel S., Steuten L., 2024. The Socioeconomic Value of Adult Immunisation Programmes. OHE Contract Research Report: Office of Health Economics. Available at: <https://www.ohe.org/publications/the-socio-economic-value-of-adult-immunisation-programmes/>

⁴ Vaccines for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). Available at: <https://www.who.int/teams/immunization-vaccines-and-biologicals/product-and-delivery-research/anti-microbial-resistance>

⁵ Antimicrobial resistance surveillance in Europe 2023 (2021 data). Available in: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Antimicrobial%20resistance%20surveillance%20in%20Europe%202023%20-%202021%20data.pdf>

⁶ "Coordinating Against Antimicrobial Resistance: Moving From Findings to Action" November 26, 2024. Press Release, available at: <https://amresistance.boussiasevents.gr/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/deltio-typoy-2024.pdf>

countries⁷ and in Greece⁸. At the same time, the major challenges facing humanity such as climate change, migration, war conflicts indicate the necessity of cooperation at international and European level in terms of epidemiological surveillance.

The evolution of the vaccine sector creates new milestones as vaccines, in addition to strengthening the immune system and the consequent prevention of life-threatening diseases, also acquire a therapeutic character through the personalized combined approach of treatment and vaccination, in serious diseases such as cancer⁹.

Vaccination is a key pillar of Health Policy and healthy living, as it is a companion throughout our lives. The development, implementation and sustainability of vaccination programs are an investment in people and society. Greece has one of the most up-to-date vaccination programs that addresses the entire age range of the population.

However, collective efforts and long-term alliances are needed to:

- **the institutionalization of official vaccination targets** per disease, which will reflect the faith and commitment of the State itself towards the value of the Vaccination Programs, while inspiring confidence in its Citizens, while acting as a guide for the Health Professionals who are called upon to implement the recommendations,
- the **continuous information and awareness of the population on the value of vaccination**
- **the consistent registration of vaccinations through the Vaccination** Registries of Children, Adolescents and Adults
- the **creation of an adequate budget for vaccines**, which will be updated in line with the health needs of the population and technological developments.

We must, in the face of the society we all live in and the next generations that will follow, cooperate with a vision and a plan, in order to preserve the achievements of vaccines for the well-being of all of us. With the cooperation of all parties involved, it is possible to develop a strategic national plan to strengthen vaccination in our country.

⁷ <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/ecdc-reports-vaccine-preventable-diseases-rise-eueea>

⁸ EODY - Press Releases 06.06.2024. An outbreak of whooping cough cases in our country. The need to vaccinate sick people and pregnant women. Available at: <https://eody.gov.gr/exarsi-kroysmaton-kokkyti-stin-chora-mas-anagki-emboliasmoy-epinoson-atomon-kai-egkyon-gynaikon/>

⁹ Cancer Research Institute - Cancer Vaccines: Preventive, Therapeutic, Personalized. Available in: <https://www.cancerresearch.org/treatment-types/cancer-vaccines>