

## **European healthcare professionals underline the importance of routine vaccination**

In July, WHO and UNICEF warned that the global vaccination coverage continued to decline in 2021, with 25 million children missing out on lifesaving vaccines. Inadequate coverage levels have already resulted in avoidable outbreaks of measles and polio, also in Europe.<sup>1</sup> For example in August, there were signs of the polio virus spreading in London.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the war in Ukraine has led to millions of refugee children who must be protected and whose vaccination schedule should be updated.

Healthcare professionals should ensure that children are up-to-date on their routine and COVID-19 vaccines particularly now when the schools have started again. This is crucial to be protected against serious, sometimes deadly diseases, despite the challenges and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is important that healthcare professionals engage in continuous professional education and are updated with the latest scientific evidence, in order to recommend vaccinations and strengthen the positive influence of healthcare providers on vaccine confidence.<sup>3</sup>

The Coalition for Vaccination reaffirms that vaccination is a safe and efficient way of protecting individuals and populations from vaccine-preventable communicable diseases. Healthcare professionals are trusted sources of information for parents, and they can help families make informed decisions that contribute to public health.

### **The Coalition for Vaccination reiterates that healthcare professionals should:**

- remind families whose children are behind on routine vaccination;
- inform families when and how children are eligible for COVID-19 vaccines;
- show families where they can find information on the national immunisation programmes;
- listen to and discuss with hesitant people, clarifying information, debunking myths and tackling disinformation;
- build trust in vaccines by being transparent and up-to-date with scientific evidence;
- support migrants (e.g. Ukrainian refugees) and fragile populations;
- be aware that they and their colleagues are acting as role models and, therefore, be vaccinated according to their own national programme.

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<sup>1</sup> [COVID-19 pandemic fuels largest continued backslide in vaccinations in three decades](#). WHO, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> [Extra polio vaccine dose for children \(London only\)](#). National Health Service (NHS), 2022.

<sup>3</sup> [Vaccine confidence among parents: Large scale study in eighteen European countries](#). Vaccine Volume 38, Issue 6, 2020.

*The [Coalition for Vaccination](#) brings together European associations of healthcare professionals and students. It was convened by the European Commission in 2019 with an aim to support delivering accurate information to the public, combating myths around vaccines and vaccination, and exchanging best practices on vaccination.*