

"Obligation" is not a foul word when it applies to vaccinating against Covid-19

Press release from the National Academy of Medicine, 25 May, 2021

After having exceeded 20 million of primary vaccinations against Covid-19, i.e. 30% of the French population, on May 15, the current goal of the national vaccination campaign is to reach 30 million people vaccinated for the first time by mid-June. Although it is planned, in the short term, to extend vaccination to all French people over 18 years old, it will be very difficult to reach before the end of summer a vaccination coverage rate that would ensure a collective immunity sufficient to control the epidemic, i.e. 90% of the adult population or 80% of the total population (children included). Even if the deliveries of vaccines make it possible to reach and then maintain, a rate of 600,000 injected doses per day, the dynamism of the campaign will come up against the obstacle of reluctant people and people opposed to vaccination, the importance of these two recalcitrant categories being currently estimated at 15% for each of them.

After a first period of 6 months during which the shortage of vaccines required that the vaccination campaign respected an evolving prioritization of candidates for vaccination, the prospects of an increasing supply risk placing France in front of the paradox of a surplus of doses in the face of an insufficient vaccination coverage. Extension of SARS-CoV-2 vaccination to adolescents and children should be considered as soon as vaccine protocols are approved in these age groups. Necessary for the acquisition of a collective immunity, this extension will encounter another obstacle to be overcome: the reluctance of parents who will not fail to object that Covid-19 is generally mild at a young age. Already mentioned several times, but rejected on the realistic argument of the lack of vaccines, the vaccination obligation must now be considered. This measure was applied in France for smallpox (1902-1984), diphtheria (1938), tetanus (1940), tuberculosis (1950-2007), polio (1964), and extended in 2017 to 11 infant vaccines. It is necessary in all cases where an effective vaccination makes it possible to eliminate a widespread, severe and often fatal disease. With an efficacy rate of 90 to 95% against severe forms of Covid-19, the vaccines currently approved in France against SARS-CoV-2 meet the conditions which would allow the compulsory vaccination to be used in the face of a formidable epidemic, with, in particular, social impacts that individual (barrier gestures) and collective (curfew, confinement) measures are unable to control over time.

In practice, the implementation of such an obligation can only be introduced gradually.

This is why the National Academy of Medicine **recommends**:

- **to implement without delay the "vaccination pass"** previously recommended [1];
- **to make the vaccination against SARS-CoV-2 required:**
 - . for the practice of any essential professional activity: government and state management, education, health [2], security and defense services (police, fire and rescue services, army), population supply services (food, water, energy, cash, computer equipment) and other public services
 - . for the exercise of professional activities involving contact with the public, particularly in the retail, catering, hotel and hospitality sectors, cultural and sports establishments;
 - . prior to all activities involving travels or gatherings, such as international trips, spa [3] or associative occupations;
 - . for all blood, tissue or organ donors;
 - . for students before the start of the 2021 academic year.

1. Communiqué de l'Académie nationale de médecine « Certificat de vaccination contre la Covid-19 : un "passe" transitoire pour relancer l'activité du pays et faire adhérer à la vaccination », 29 avril 2021
2. Communiqué de l'Académie nationale de médecine « La vaccination des soignants contre la Covid-19 doit devenir obligatoire », 9 mars 2021
3. Communiqué de l'Académie nationale de médecine « Peut-on rouvrir sans danger les établissements thermaux ? », 12 mai 2021