

“What does Swissmedic actually do?”

[Instagram information campaign](#), July 2022

Everyone now knows that Swissmedic authorises COVID-19 vaccines. But does that also then mean Swissmedic has to buy enough vaccine doses before launching the next vaccination campaign? Wait a minute, is that even Swissmedic's responsibility – or is it up to the FOPH? What does Swissmedic actually do?

True or false?

Swissmedic is responsible for the authorisation of medicinal products and medical devices.

False

Swissmedic is responsible for the authorisation of medicinal products as well as the market surveillance of medicinal products and medical devices. In contrast with medicinal products, medical devices are not authorised by Swissmedic.

Swissmedic organises vaccination campaigns.

False

The Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), together with its partner organisation the Federal Commission for Vaccination (FCV), is responsible for organising national vaccination campaigns. The cantonal Departments of Health are the managing agencies at cantonal level.

Swissmedic is responsible for the quality assurance of medicinal products for animals.

True

Swissmedic ensures that veterinary medicines are authorised only if they are safe, effective and of a high quality.

Swissmedic purchases vaccines for the Swiss population.

False

The Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) is responsible for the procurement of medicinal products.

Swissmedic deals with smoking cessation products.

True

Swissmedic is responsible for medicines that help people stop smoking.

Swissmedic intervenes in the event of non-conforming COVID-19 tests.

True

As a market surveillance authority, Swissmedic receives reports of suspicious COVID-19 tests, checks the tests and takes any necessary measures.

Swissmedic is responsible for the disposal of therapeutic products.

False

Special demands are placed on the collection, interim storage, transport and treatment of medical waste.

The Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) is responsible for these tasks.

Swissmedic regulates the handling of narcotics and is responsible for addiction prevention.

False

The Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) is responsible for the handling of narcotics and for issues relating to addiction prevention.

Swissmedic checks the reprocessing of multiple-use medical devices in hospitals.

True

Swissmedic is responsible for monitoring the maintenance and reprocessing of medical devices used in hospitals.

Swissmedic single-handedly supervises clinical trials with medicinal products and medical devices.

False

Depending on the legal requirements, either Swissmedic or the cantonal ethics committee is responsible for approving clinical trials.

Swissmedic is responsible for the market surveillance of medical devices.

True

Swissmedic receives suspicion reports, takes the necessary corrective actions in a risk-based manner and monitors their implementation.

Swissmedic checks all advertising formats for medicinal products before they are published.

False

Advertising to the public relating to painkillers, sleeping tablets and tranquillisers, laxatives or appetite suppressants for which a potential for abuse or dependence also exists is checked in advance by Swissmedic.

Swissmedic is responsible for the quality assurance of food products.

False

The Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO) is responsible for food safety.

Swissmedic regulates the handling of cosmetics.

False

Cosmetic products on sale in Switzerland must pose no risk to health. The Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO) is responsible for this issue.

Swissmedic monitors the Swiss therapeutic products market and thereby protects Swiss patients from illegal and counterfeit therapeutic products.

True

Swissmedic is required by law to monitor the Swiss therapeutic products market and prevent illegal and counterfeit therapeutic products from entering the Swiss market.

Swissmedic monitors the manufacturers and distributors of dietary supplements.

False

The Cantonal Chemists monitor the manufacturers and distributors of dietary supplements.

Swissmedic initiates proceedings against illegal imports of doping agents.

False

Swiss Sport Integrity is responsible for the control of illegal imports of doping agents and also initiates the associated proceedings.

All vaccine batches are checked by Swissmedic before they are placed on the market.

True

Swissmedic checks both vaccine batches and stable blood products before they are placed on the market.

Swissmedic conducts criminal prosecutions when medicinal products are imported illegally.

True

If fairly large quantities of medicines are imported or in the event of a repeat offence, Swissmedic initiates criminal proceedings for the illegal import of medicinal products. Criminal proceedings are also taken against the illegal manufacture of, and trading in, medicinal products.

If necessary, Swissmedic asks companies to submit applications for urgently needed medicines.

False

Swissmedic can only authorise a medicinal product if an authorisation application has been submitted. The therapeutic products agency is not allowed to ask companies to submit such an application. This separation from industry is of crucial importance for the independent evaluation. However, Swissmedic does help companies by clarifying regulatory issues connected with application submission.

Swissmedic determines the selling prices of medicinal products.

False

These negotiations are conducted between the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) and the authorisation holders.

Swissmedic is responsible for deciding which medicines are paid for by the compulsory health insurance schemes.

False

The FOPH is responsible for deciding which medicines are paid for by a compulsory health insurance scheme.

Swissmedic conducts clinical studies itself.

False

Swissmedic does not conduct any clinical studies itself, but is responsible for authorising clinical trials in Switzerland.

Complementary and herbal medicinal products do not need to be authorised.

False

In Switzerland however, complementary and herbal medicinal products do benefit from various simplified authorisation procedures.