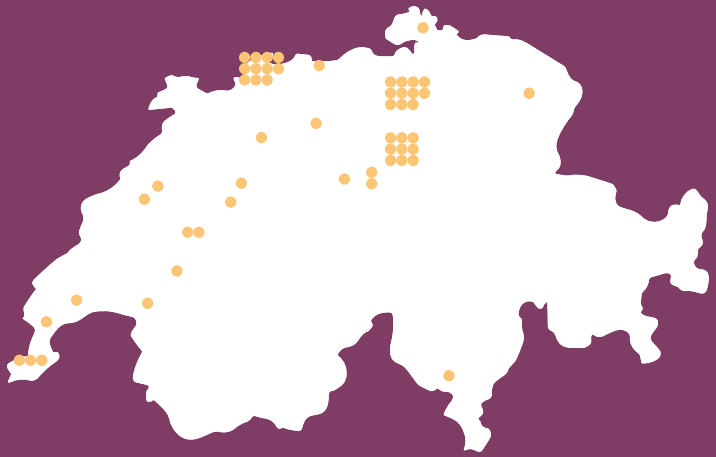
interpharma:ph

# HEALTH PANORAMA 2025

**Key facts and figures on the Swiss health and pharmaceutical landscape**

# The research-based pharmaceutical industry in Switzerland



The member companies of Interpharma employ almost **40’000 people** at **47 sites** across Switzerland.

Interactive map



# Health policy is location policy

**Dear Reader,**

The pharmaceutical industry makes a key contribution to health, innovation and prosperity in Switzerland. However, geopolitical dynamics are putting Switzerland under enormous pressure as a business location and endangering the supply of essential medications for patients – and not only in Switzerland, but around the world. Today, health policy is also location policy.

Swift and well-coordinated political action is now required if the innovative pharmaceutical industry is to remain a driver of growth and a guarantor of prosperity for Switzerland. The “Health Panorama” provides an overview and offers valuable food for thought in this regard – our contribution to a fact-based discourse, a healthy population and a strong Switzerland as an industry location.

You will also find facts and figures online at www.datacenter.interpharma.ch, and can order or download this and other interesting publications at www.interpharma.ch.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of Health Panorama, and we look forward to any feedback you may have.

Dr. René Buholzer
CEO and Delegate of the Board

# The Swiss healthcare system





In 2023, average **life expectancy** for the Swiss population as a whole was around **84.3 years – the highest in the world.**

**The cancer survival rate has almost doubled** compared to the 1980s.

Switzerland spends only **0.43 percent of its GDP** on innovative medicines – significantly less than countries with similar purchasing power.

# Life expectancy in Switzerland is increasing

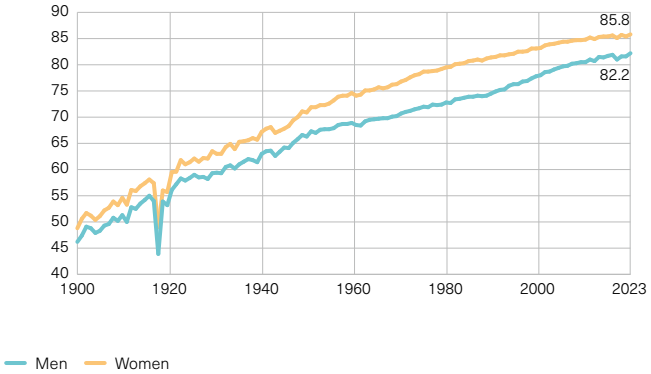
Life expectancy in Switzerland has almost doubled in the last 100 years.

Thanks to better healthcare, innovative drugs, improved hygiene and a high quality of life, we are not only living longer, but also more healthily.

In the early 1990s, life expectancy was still around seven years higher for women than for men – today, this gap is just under four years.



**Mean life expectancy at birth**
In years, 1900–2023




Source: Federal Statistical Office (2025), Statistisches Lexikon der Schweiz.



# Switzerland has the highest life expectancy in the world

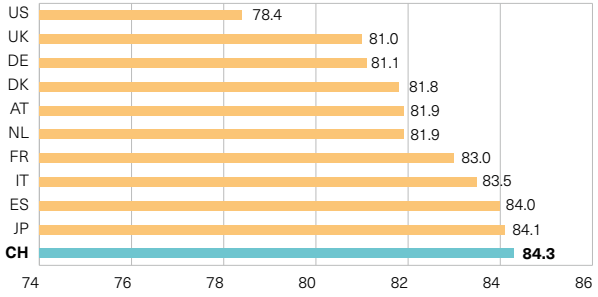
At an average of around 84.3 years for the population as a whole, Switzerland had the highest life expectancy in the world in 2023.

According to the OECD, Switzerland has thus overtaken the previous front runner, Japan. The (estimated) mean life expectancy in Japan was 84.1 years.

Switzerland owes its leading position to a high-quality healthcare system that is accessible to the entire population, and a high quality of life (to name just two examples).



**Mean life expectancy at birth in international comparison**
In years, 2023




Source: OECD (2025), OECD Health Statistics 2023.

# Switzerland is getting older

The age pyramid clearly shows that the average age of the Swiss population is rising steadily.

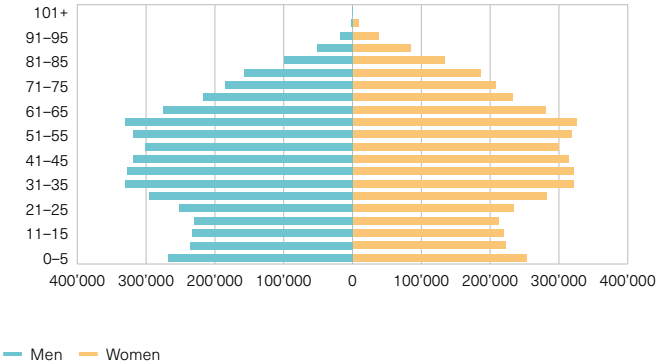
This is partly due to the low birth rate compared to other countries. At the same time, Swiss people have an increasing life expectancy due to good healthcare. This is also reflected in the higher healthcare and care costs.

In 2023, the median age of the permanent resident population in Switzerland was around 42.8 years – significantly higher than the estimated median age of the global population (roughly 31 years).



## Population development in Switzerland

2023




Source: Federal Office of Statistics (2025), Population and Household Statistics.



# Diseases of the cardiovascular system and cancer are the most common causes of death

The most common cause of death among women (30%) was cardiovascular disease, followed by cancer (20.8%).

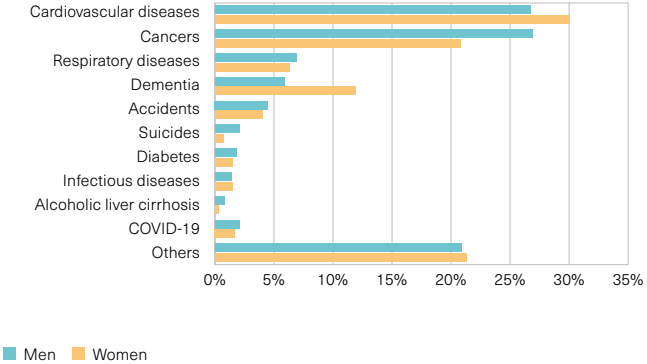
Men died almost as often from cancer (26.9%) as from cardiovascular diseases (26.7%).

The consequences of dementia, caused by the progressive loss of physical and mental abilities, are the third most common cause of death in women (11.9%) and are twice as common as in men (5.9%).



## Most common causes of death by gender

Deaths 2023: 71'822




Source: Federal Statistical Office (2024), Cause of Death Statistics.

# As life expectancy increases, growing numbers of people are suffering from dementia

Almost 2% of the Swiss population suffers from Alzheimer's or some other form of dementia. Approximately 34'800 new cases are recorded each year – one every 15 minutes on average.

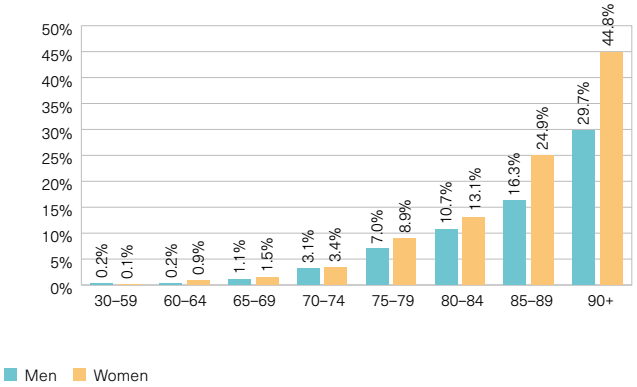
Around 45% of women over the age of 90 suffer from dementia. In men, dementia affects roughly 30% of those aged 90 and above.

Between 1998 and 2021, there were 198 unsuccessful attempts to develop an Alzheimer's drug. Pharmaceutical companies around the world are still researching effective treatments.



## Number of dementia patients

Per age, 2025




Source: Alzheimer Switzerland (2025).



# Many deaths from cancer of the digestive tract

Overall, around a quarter of all deaths in 2023 were due to cancer. At 26.9%, the proportion is higher for men than for women (20.8%).

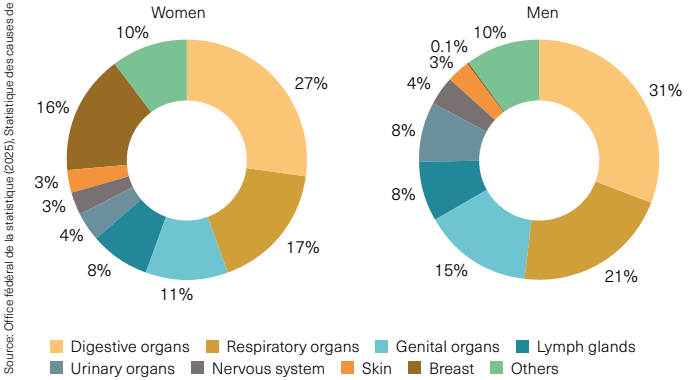
Most deaths from cancer are due to cancers of the digestive tract in both men and women. Cancer of the respiratory organs comes in at second place.

The third leading cause of death attributable to cancer is breast cancer in women and cancer of the reproductive organs in men.



## Deaths by type of tumour

2023




Source: Office fédéral de la statistique (2025), Statistique des causes de décès.

# Cancer survival rates rise significantly thanks to medical advances

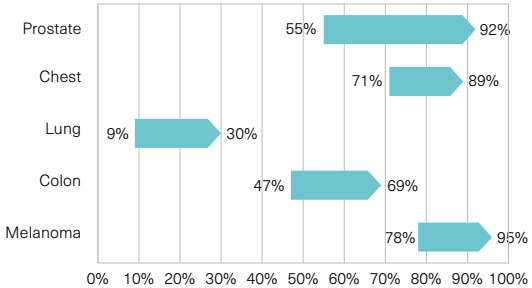
In the 2020s, survival rates for cancer patients have almost doubled compared to the 1980s.

The five-year relative survival rate for prostate cancer increased from 55% (1980–1985) to 92% (2017–2021). Lung cancer remains the biggest challenge – despite an improvement of 21 percentage points, 70% of those affected still do not survive the first five years.

Much remains to be done in terms of research. In addition to access to innovative therapies, prevention and early diagnosis of cancer are crucial.



**Relative five-year survival rate for most common types of cancer,** 1980–1985, 2017–2021




Source: National Agency for Cancer Registration (2025), Cancer survival in Switzerland.



# Drugs account for 12 out of every CHF 100 spent on healthcare

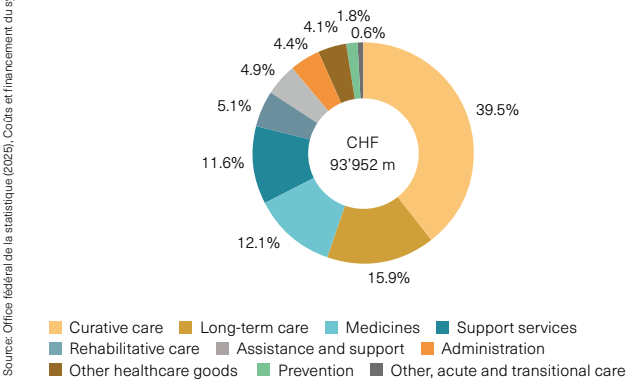
Healthcare spending in Switzerland totaled CHF 93.95 billion in 2023.

Together, curative and long-term care accounted for over half of total healthcare costs.

At CHF 11.4 billion, drugs accounted for 12.1% of healthcare spending. In other words, for every CHF 100 spent on healthcare, roughly CHF 12 are spent on drugs.



**Breakdown of healthcare costs by services provided**
Total costs in 2023: CHF 93'952 m




Source: Office fédéral de la statistique (2025), Coûts et financement du système de santé.

# The cost of drugs has increased at a slightly below-average rate over the past 13 years

In the entire available period from 2010 to 2023, total healthcare costs rose by 3.2% per year. The 2.4% rise in 2023 was below the trend of recent years. The highest growth was recorded in rehabilitative care, with an average annual increase of +6.3%.

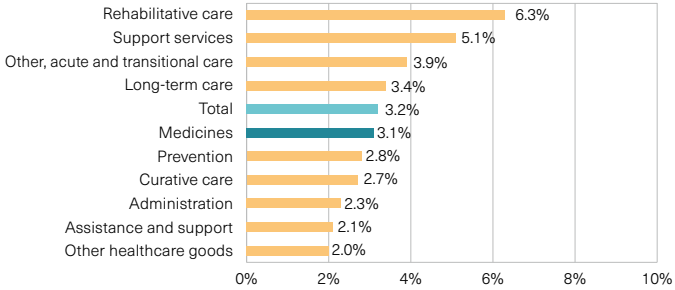
At +3.1%, the rise in spending on drugs is slightly below average compared to overall healthcare costs.

The biggest contribution to growth in absolute terms comes from curative and long-term care.



## Cost development according to services provided

Average annual growth, 2010–2023




Source: Federal Statistical Office (2025), Kosten und Finanzierung des Gesundheitswesens.



# Since the KVG was introduced, the drugs price index has fallen by 48 percent

The price index of the Federal Statistical Office shows that drugs are the only product group in the healthcare sector to have fallen continuously in price since 1996.

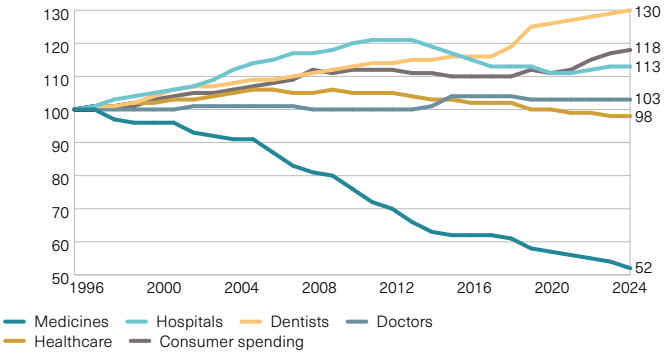
At 52 points, the price index in 2024 was 48% lower than in 1996, whereas the hospital price index, for example, was around 13% higher in 2024 than it was in 1996.

Every three years since 2012, the prices of reimbursable drugs have been reviewed and reduced where necessary, generating recurring annual savings of more than CHF 1.5 billion in the healthcare system.



## Price indices in Switzerland's healthcare system

1996–2024




Source: Federal Statistical Office (2025), National Consumer Price Index.

# Drugs as a percentage of healthcare costs are stable

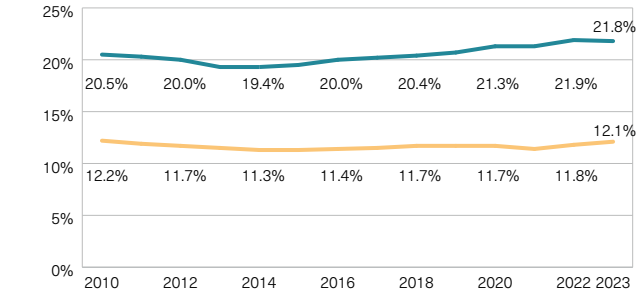
Drugs accounted for a 12.1% share of healthcare costs in 2023. The share of costs incurred under compulsory health insurance (CHI) was 21.8%.

While many innovative medicines are coming onto the market, the cost of medicines is growing at a slightly slower rate than the overall healthcare costs. Drugs as a percentage of healthcare costs have been stable for more than a decade.

The price of drugs covered by CHI experienced moderate growth due to the shift from inpatient to outpatient care.



**Cost of medicines as a proportion of healthcare and basic health insurance costs,** 2010–2023




Medicines (pharmacies, self-dispensing doctors, hospitals) as a percentage of basic health insurance costs

Medicines (pharmacies, drugstores, self-dispensing doctors, hospitals) as a percentage of healthcare costs

Source: Federal Statistical Office (2025), Kosten und Finanzierung des Gesundheitswesens.



# GDP and wages are rising faster than healthcare spending

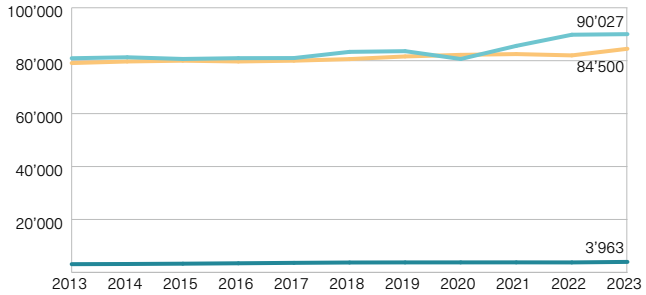
An absolute comparison with wage development and gross domestic product (GDP) is one suitable way of tracing the effective healthcare cost burden on the general public.

Between 1996 and 2023, per capita annual CHI costs in Switzerland rose by CHF 2'424 to CHF 3'963. In the same period, GDP per capita rose by CHF 31'074, and median gross income was up by CHF 18'000.

Both GDP and wages therefore rose significantly more per capita than healthcare spending.



**Per capita growth in CHI costs, GDP and wages**
In CHF, 2013–2023




Costs of compulsory basic health insurance

Wages (median gross income)

Overall economy (GDP per capita)

Source: Illustration Interpharma with data basis: Federal Office of Public Health (2025), Statistics on compulsory health insurance. Federal Statistical Office (2025), Growth and Productivity Statistics (WPS). Federal Statistical Office (2025), Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS).

# Swiss households spend more on alcohol and tobacco than on medication

Roughly one fifth of household spending goes towards rent, making this one of the biggest outlays by far for private households.

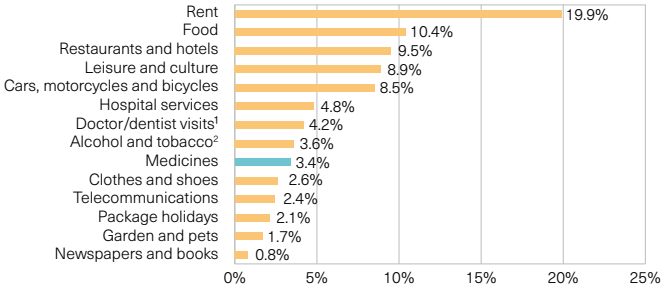
Swiss households also spend around 10% of their budget on food, and on restaurants and hotel stays. Another 8.9% is spent on leisure and culture.

People in Switzerland spend more of their income on alcohol and tobacco (3.6% in total) than they do on medication (3.4%).



## Expenditure structure of Swiss households

Basket of goods in national consumer price index, 2025




¹ Outpatient services (excluding hospital outpatients), excluding medicines
² Incl. alcohol in restaurants and hotels

Source: Federal Statistical Office (2025), National Consumer Price Index.



# Switzerland invests little in innovative drugs compared to other countries

Switzerland spends only 0.43% of its GDP on new drugs – significantly less than countries with similar purchasing power.

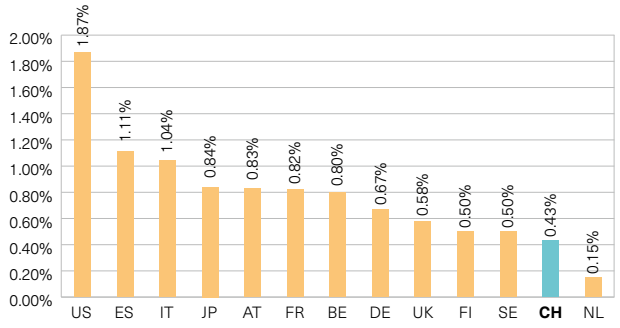
Sweden and Finland (0.50% each), Germany (0.67%), France (0.82%) and Austria (0.83%) invest more on average in innovative medicines.

At 1.87%, the US has by far the highest spending relative to GDP in the world. This means that Swiss spending on innovative therapies is only a quarter of the US level.



## Expenditure on innovative medicines as a percentage of GDP

2024




Source: Interpharma with data basis IQVIA and Worldbank (2025).

# Pharmaceutical sector





Regular drug **price reviews** lead to annual **savings of over CHF 1.5 billion** and dampened the sector by **3.6 percent** in 2024.

In 2023, patent-protected **original medicines** were on average **9 percent cheaper** abroad than in Switzerland – after adjusting for purchasing power, Switzerland is the cheapest country.

**Sales of generics** surpassed the **CHF 1 billion** mark for the first time in 2024 due to support measures.

# Increasing demand for provision of medications

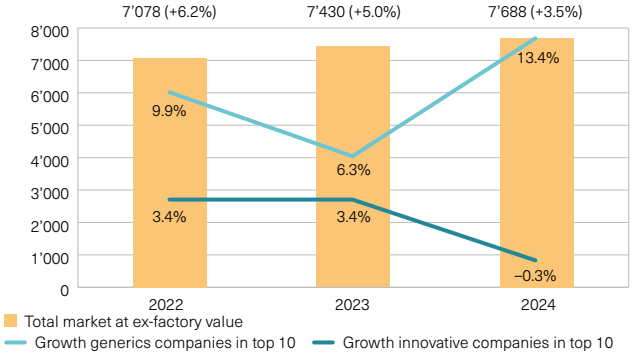
The pharmaceutical sector comprises prescription-only and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, as well as reimbursable drugs (included in the SL) and non-reimbursable drugs.

In 2024, Switzerland's drug sector achieved a volume of CHF 7.7 billion at ex-factory prices. At +3.5%, growth was weaker than in previous years.

Growth is driven in particular by rising demand for medical care and by demographic trends. New and innovative drugs made an above-average contribution to growth in 2024.



## Development of market value at factory gate prices
In CHF millions




Companies ranked exclusively in the top 10 in terms of revenue in Switzerland, including two generic drug companies and eight innovative companies.

Source: Interpharma calculations based on IQVIA AG data (2025).



# Price cuts dampen growth in the medication sector

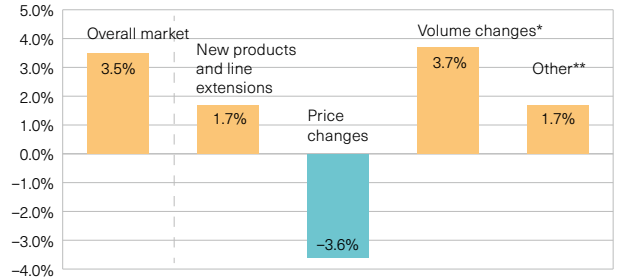
The Swiss drug sector grew by 3.5% in 2024. Demand for drugs is on the rise (contribution to growth: +3.7%) due to demographic development.

Regular drug price reviews result in recurring annual savings of more than CHF 1.5 billion, and dampened the overall market by –3.6% in 2024. The pharmaceutical industry is therefore making a major contribution to containing the increase in healthcare costs.

New products – designed to treat cancer and autoimmune diseases, for example – contributed +1.7% to growth.



## Development of individual components at ex-factory prices
Growth 2024




* Volume changes: percentage of revenue growth resulting from increased sales of products launched on the market before 2024.
** Interactive effects: caused by simultaneous interactions between price and quantity changes.
Residual effects: change in existing strengths from smaller to larger packaging units or vice versa.

Source: Interpharma calculations based on IQVIA AG data (2025).

# One-fifth of the price of innovative drugs goes to distribution

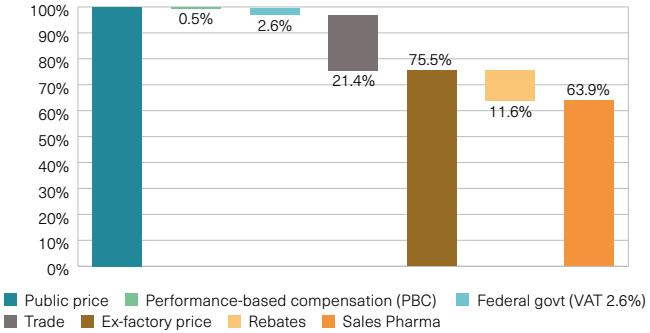
For a patent-protected innovative medicine priced at CHF 100 in 2024, CHF 24.50 went to retailers, doctors, pharmacists and the federal government via VAT.

On average, CHF 12 is borne directly by the industry in the form of discounts.

This leaves the company with just under two-thirds of the retail price as revenue.



## Composition of drug prices
2024




The trade includes both a price-related surcharge in percent of the ex-factory price (FAP) and a pack-related surcharge in CHF depending on the level of the FAP.

Source: Interpharma calculations with IQVIA database and joint foreign price comparison by santésuisse and Interpharma (2024).



# Cost savings of CHF 1.5 billion through drug price reductions

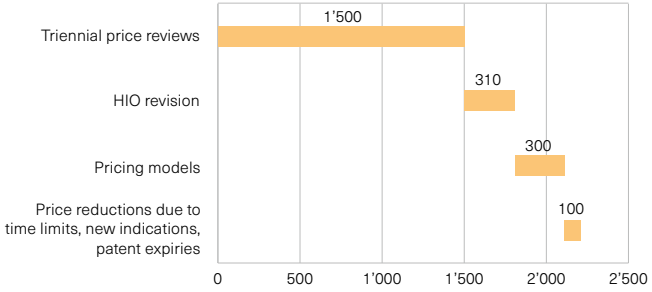
The pharmaceutical industry is the only player in the Swiss healthcare sector that makes a significant contribution to cost containment through institutionalized price reviews. This alone generates recurring savings of around CHF 1.5 billion per year.

The industry is achieving further significant savings through the revision of the Health Insurance Ordinance (HIO) and the introduction of price models (around CHF 300 million in each case).

This is supplemented by a further CHF 100 million through price reductions due to fixed terms, new indications and patent expiry.



## Savings through triennial price reductions by the FOPH
In million CHF, 2024




Source: Interpharma based on report of GPK-S 14.11.2023, Federal Council press releases 22.9.2023 and 8.12.2023.

# The price level in Switzerland is generally above average

Prices in Switzerland are generally above average compared with economically similar countries. This is also due to the very high purchasing power in Switzerland: one franc buys more goods and services than other currencies.

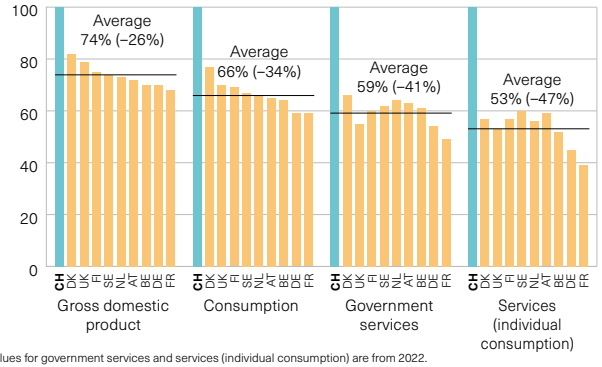
The gross domestic product (GDP) highlights the difference in disposable income. Measured in terms of GDP, Switzerland is 26% above the average of the nine international reference pricing countries.

The prices for consumer goods, as well as services, are 34% to 47% lower in other European countries than in Switzerland.



## Comparative price level indices

Switzerland = 100, 2024




UK values for government services and services (individual consumption) are from 2022.

Source: Eurostat (2025), comparative price level indices and real expenditures for ESA 2010 aggregates.



# Patented medicine prices are at the European level

In 2023, the 250 top-selling patent-protected original preparations were on average 9% cheaper in other comparable countries than in Switzerland.

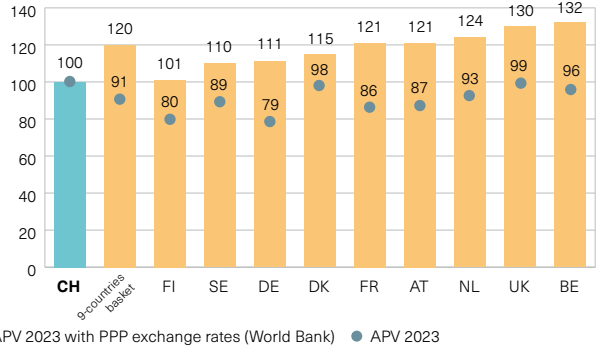
With exchange rates adjusted for purchasing power, Switzerland is the cheapest in a European comparison. On average, patent-protected medication costs 20% more abroad than in Switzerland, adjusted for purchasing power.

With its regular price reviews, the pharmaceutical industry generates recurring annual savings of more than CHF 1.5 billion in the healthcare sector.



## Top 250 original products, basket of 9 countries

Exchange rate CHF/EUR: 1.01*, prices of April 2024




* Exchange rate applied by the FOPH when reviewing.

Source: Interpharma with data basis: Gemeinsamer Auslandpreisvergleich from santésuisse and Interpharma (May 2024), Worldbank (2025), PPP conversion factor.

# Patent-protected products still make up the bulk of the medication sector

At 52%, patent-protected drugs make up the largest proportion of Switzerland's pharmaceutical sector.

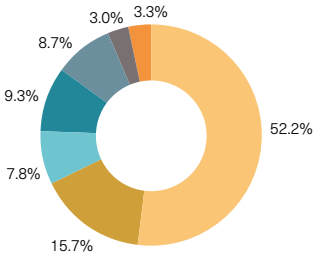
The generics-eligible market – consisting of off-patent original preparations with generic competition and generics – represents a market share of around 24%.

In 2024, generics again accounted for a greater share of the reimbursable drugs sector than off-patent original products.



## Composition of the market for covered medicines

By sales at ex-factory prices, 2024




Patent-protected products | Generics | Originals (chemical products whose patent has expired and at least 1 generic) | Products whose patent protection has expired and without generics/biosimilars substitution | Out of market | Reference products (biologics with expired patent protection and at least 1 biosimilar) | Biosimilars

Source: Interpharma calculations based on IQVIA AG data (2025).



# Growing number of new drugs for cancer, autoimmune diseases and viral diseases

As there are more and more treatments for cancer, autoimmune diseases and viral diseases, patients' chances of recovery are increasing.

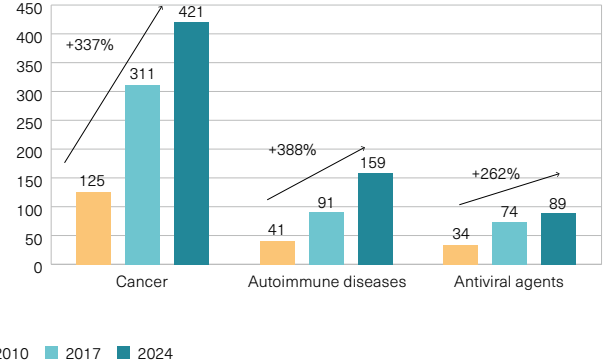
A total of 421 cancer treatment drugs were available in Switzerland in 2024, while 296 innovative medicinal products have been added in this area since 2010.

The number of available treatments for autoimmune diseases and viral diseases is almost four times as high as in 2010 and two-and-a-half times as high as in 2010, respectively.



## Reimbursable drugs market. Number of available therapies

2010, 2017, 2024




Source: Federal Office of Public Health (2025), Specialities list.

2010 | 2017 | 2024

# Strong sales growth in generics

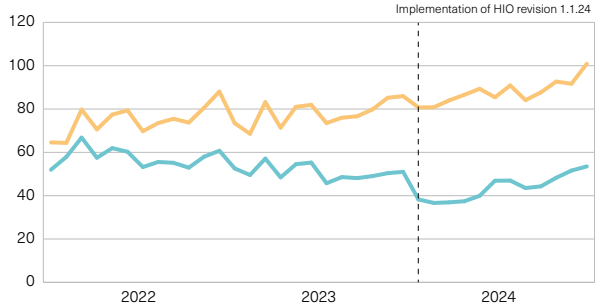
Generics are identical copies of off-patent original preparations based on synthetic active ingredients.

The share of generics relative to their original preparations is steadily increasing.

However, as a result of political measures, sales of generics were boosted significantly again in 2024, reaching more than CHF 100 million for the first time in December 2024.



## Generics segment
In CHF millions at ex-factory, 2022–2024




Source: IQVIA AG (2025).



# Share of generics increasing at the expense of originals

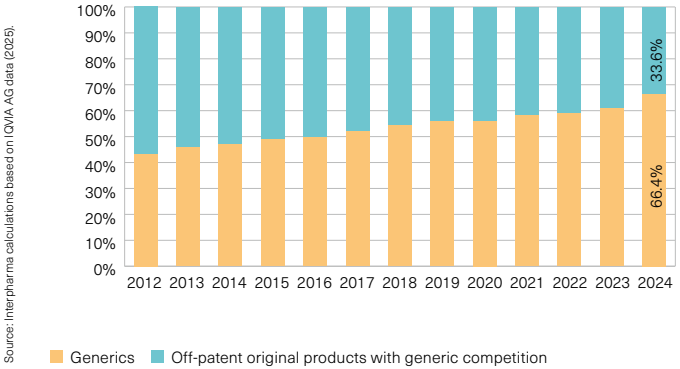
The share of generics has increased continuously since 2012 and was 66.4% in 2024.

Relative to the previous year, the share therefore rose by 5.6%.

Measured by the number of tablets, generics were dispensed in 66 out of 100 cases in Switzerland in which generics were available in 2024.



## Generics market share
Total, 2012–2024




Source: Interpharma calculations based on IQVIA AG data (2025).

# Biosimilars – more complex than generics

Modern biotechnology has made enormous medical advances in recent decades, especially in the treatment of serious diseases. With the expiry of patents for biologics, the first imitative products – biosimilars – appeared.

Generics consist of simple molecules and can be copied exactly. Biosimilars, on the other hand, are produced from living cells and are therefore never completely identical to the original, but similar at the most.

The development, production and approval of biosimilars is far more complex and costly than that of generics. A generic drug might be compared to a bicycle – a biosimilar to an airplane.



## Difference between generics and biosimilars

| | Generics | Biosimilars |
|---|---|---|
| Complexity | Minimal | Very high, clinical trials required |
| Comparability | Identical copy of the original product | Similarity must be proven through clinical trials |
| Development costs | At least CHF 1 million | At least CHF 100 million |
| Number of producers | Many | Few |

Source: Interpharma (2025).



# Share of biosimilars increases at the expense of biological reference products

Biologics play a key role in treatment and diagnosis, for example for cancer and diabetes. Examples include antibodies, interferons, clotting factors and insulins.

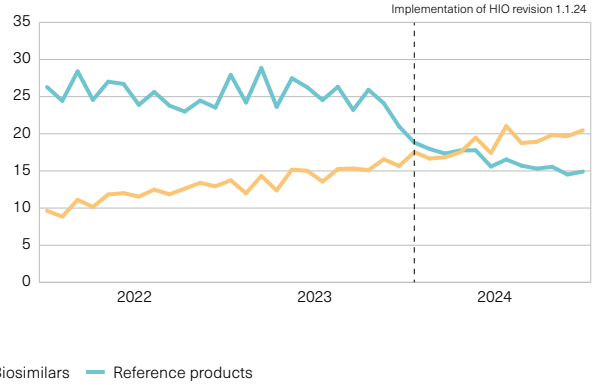
Biosimilars are imitation products of biologics. Unlike generics, they are never completely identical, but they, too, are cheaper options on the market after the patent expires.

In 2024, biosimilars generated higher sales than their reference products, biologics, for the first time – a clear shift in the trend.



## Biosimilar segment

Value in millions at ex-factory, 2022–2024




Source: IQVIA AG (2025).

# Focus on the patient





**Drugs are** particularly effective at increasing life expectancy – **for every dollar invested,** they yield around 14 times more lifetime than general medical care.

Between 1997 and 2021, **deaths** from **cancer fell** by 28 percent.

In 2018, around **64 percent** of EMA-**approved drugs** were **fully available** in Switzerland. In **2024,** the figure was just **47 percent.**

# Diseases generate a variety of costs

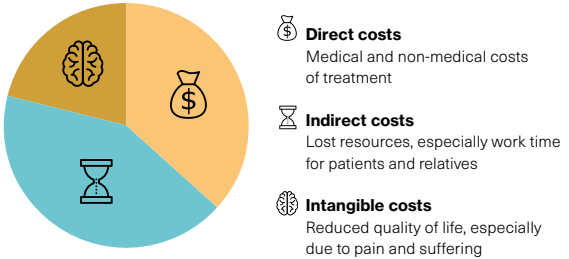
Diseases are primarily a burden on the sick and their relatives. But others are often affected too – health insurers cover the costs of medical treatment, employers suffer from lost working hours and the patient's social circle also has to deal with the consequences of disease (e.g. care costs).

A distinction can be made between direct costs (medical and non-medical treatment costs), indirect costs (lost resources) and intangible costs (reduced quality of life). The sum of these costs corresponds to the cost of a disease to society.



## Composition of overall costs of a disease

Illustration




Source: Polynomics (2020), Gesellschaftliche Betrachtung der Krankheitskosten.



# Impact of treatment innovation on healthcare costs

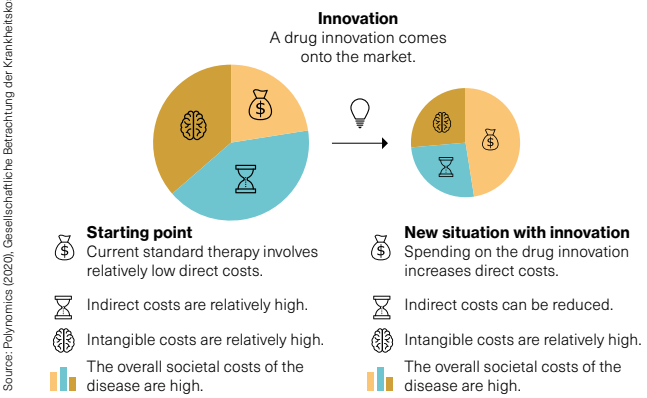
Innovative drugs can revolutionize the treatment of diseases. This can also have an impact on the different types of healthcare costs.

Generally speaking, direct treatment costs increase when an innovation is created, whereas indirect and intangible costs decrease. From a macroeconomic perspective, it is particularly interesting to know whether the novel treatment leads to a reduction in the total costs of the disease. How the composition of the total costs develops is of secondary importance.



## Disease costs from a societal perspective

Impact of innovation; illustration




Source: Polynomics (2020), Gesellschaftliche Betrachtung der Krankheitskosten.

# The benefit of innovative drugs is felt at multiple levels

The direct benefit of innovative drugs is apparent at three levels: patients benefit from the chance of a cure, faster recovery or a better quality of life.

Society benefits from innovations. Shortened and improved healing processes cut treatment and nursing costs, enabling patients to return to work more quickly.

Lastly, the national economy benefits too, since new drugs enable reinvestment in research and development. This creates jobs, generates added value and brings in higher tax revenues.



## Overall consideration of the benefits

**Overall consideration of the benefits**
- Higher life expectancy
- Faster recovery
- Chance of a cure
- Better quality of life
- Reduced emotional burden

**Benefits to society**
- Lower costs through shorter healing process
- Quicker return to work
- Reduced nursing costs
- Effects on other social institutions (unemployment insurance, disability insurance)

**Benefits to the economy**
- Jobs
- R&D investments
- Contribution to gross value added
- Taxes

Source: Interpharma (2025).



# Innovations increase life expectancy and relieve the strain on the health-care system

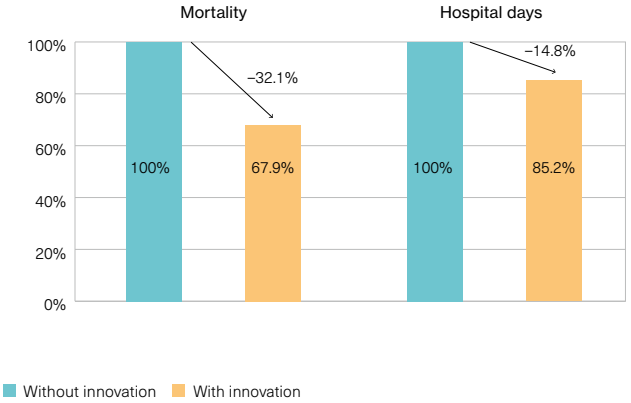
From a macroeconomic perspective, pharmaceutical innovations can cut the total cost of a disease even if the price of a new drug causes direct treatment costs to rise.

Using data for Switzerland, the effect of pharmaceutical innovations introduced between 1990 and 2011, or 1994 and 2010, can be demonstrated at various levels.

The innovations reduced mortality among the under-85s by almost one third and resulted in two million fewer hospital days in 2019, saving the healthcare system CHF 3 billion.



## Benefits of pharmaceutical innovations




Source: Lichtenberg, Frank (2022): The association between pharmaceutical innovation and both premature mortality and hospital utilization in Switzerland, 1996–2019. Swiss Journal of Economics and Statistics (2022), 158:7.

# Medication as a major lever for health and life expectancy

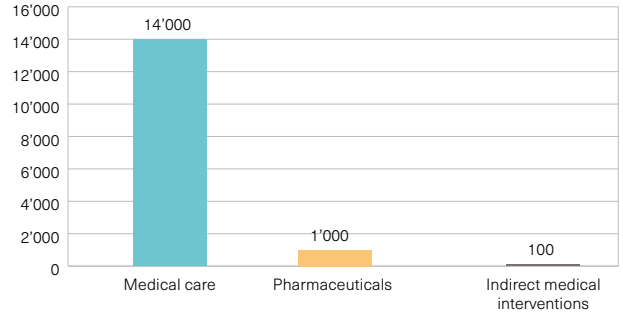
Drugs are much more effective than other treatments – for every dollar invested, they provide about 14 times more life expectancy gains than general medical care (e.g. operations, inpatient care).

Pharmaceutical innovation thus saves costs in the healthcare system by reducing expensive hospital stays and other costly measures.

Only indirect medical interventions (e.g. prevention or structural improvements) produce an even better ratio.



**Cost per life year gained**
Comparison of different health interventions, in US dollars, 1990–2015




Costs per person per year in USD to increase life expectancy by one year.

Source: Buxbaum et al. (2020), Contributions of Public Health, Pharmaceuticals, and other Medical Care to US Life Expectancy Changes, 1990-2015), Health Affairs 39, No. 9 (2020), 1546-1556.



# HPV vaccination saves 12'000 lives per year

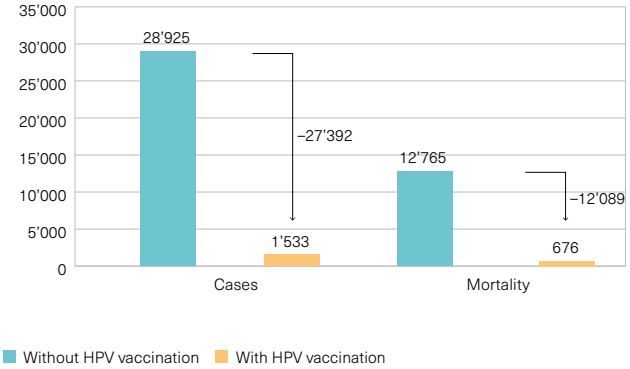
Vaccinations are a highly effective preventive measure that saves lives in the long run and reduces the burden of disease on society.

HPV vaccinations prevent around 95% of infections, massively reducing the risk of cervical cancer.

Vaccination can prevent more than 27'000 cases of HPV-related cancer and around 12'000 deaths every year worldwide.



**Effects of HPV vaccination on the number of cases and deaths,** 2020




Source: Interpharma with data basis EFPIA (2025), The Pharmaceutical Industry in Figures.

# Despite a consistently high level of new cases, fewer people are dying of cancer

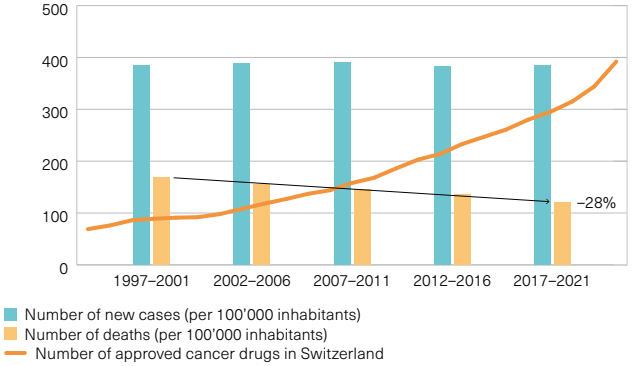
Thanks to innovative treatment methods, the treatment of cancer has vastly improved in recent decades.

Despite the constant number of new cases, the number of deaths due to cancer is steadily declining thanks in particular to newly approved, innovative drugs and therapies.

While there were only 69 approved cancer drugs in Switzerland in 1997, there were 392 in 2021. At the same time, deaths from cancer decreased by 28% from 1997 to 2021.



**Cancer: number of new cases, deaths and approved drugs in Switzerland,** in five-year periods, 1997–2021




Source: Interpharma (2025) based on data from FSO (2025) and Swissmedic (2025).



# Fair access to innovative therapies

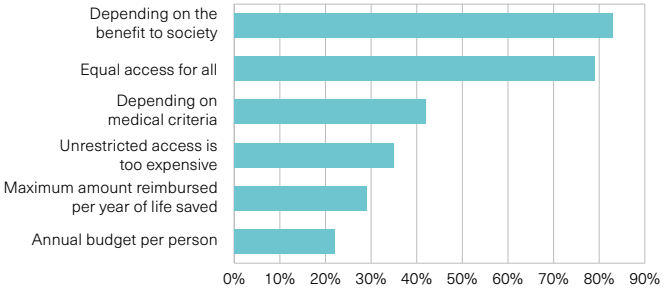
According to the representative "Health Monitor", a clear majority of 83% of the electorate is in favour of regulating access to innovative therapies according to their benefit to society.

A total of 79% are in favour of all patients having equal access to innovative therapies.

Models such as an annual budget per person or fixed amounts per year of life gained, on the other hand, are widely rejected by the public.



**Access to innovative therapies**
"Health Monitor 2025", in percent of eligible voters: fully/somewhat agree




Source: gfs.bern, Health Monitor 2025, (N = 1200).

# Comparison of regulatory approval times for drugs

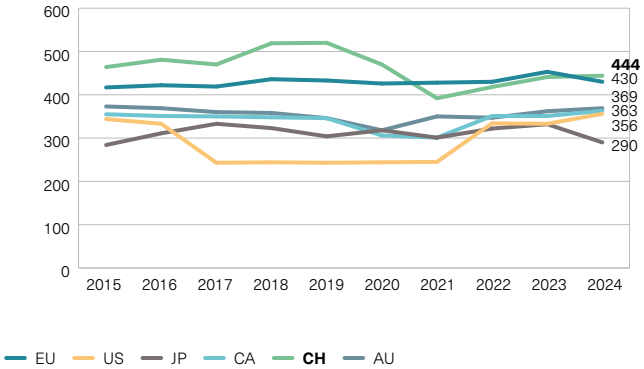
Having a strong and independent regulatory authority for medicinal products is in the interest of both patient safety and Switzerland as a pharmaceutical hub.

An international comparison with other authorities reveals that substantial improvements have been made to Swiss marketing authorization over the period from 2019 to 2021. Processing times in Switzerland have been increasing again since 2021.

However, approval by the regulatory authority does not mean that a medicinal product will immediately be made available to patients on an equal footing. Before this can happen, it is necessary to establish reimbursement under basic insurance.



**Comparison of regulatory approval times for medicines**
In days; new active substances (NAS) 2014–2023; comparison between USA (FDA), EU (EMA), Japan, Canada, Australia and Switzerland (Swissmedic).




Source: CIRS (2025), RD Briefing 101 – New drug approvals by six major authorities 2015–2024.



# Switzerland is losing ground in terms of access to innovations

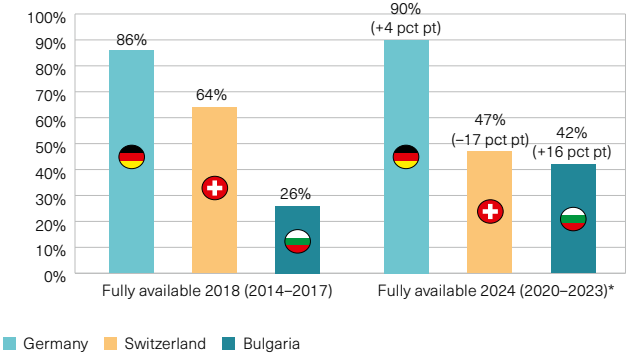
EFPIA Patients W.A.I.T. Indicator compares access to medicines in Europe.

Of the new, innovative drugs approved by the EMA, around 64% were fully available in Switzerland in 2018. In 2024, this figure fell to just 47% – a decline of 17 percentage points.

Compared with Germany, this means that only about half of the new innovative medications covered there are equally available to all patients in Switzerland. In an international comparison, Switzerland comes out only slightly ahead of Bulgaria.



**Availability of innovative medicines in international comparison**
2014–2023




Source: Interpharma calculations based on EFPIA Patients W.A.I.T. Indicator 2024 Survey.

* Change compared to the WAIT study from 2018 in brackets.

# Access to innovations in Switzerland comes with a delay

Patients in Switzerland have been experiencing increasingly long delays in their wait for access to innovative drugs since 2016.

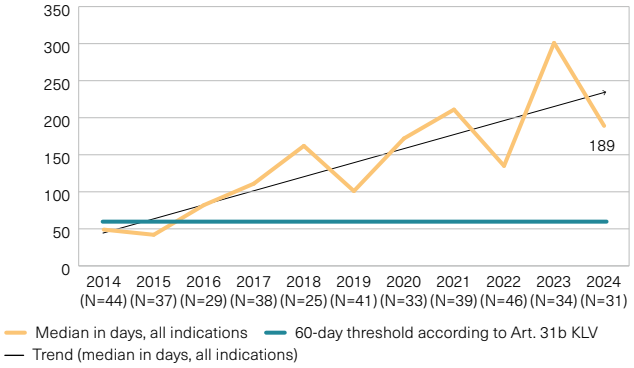
The median time from marketing authorization to inclusion in the specialities list (SL) was 189 days in 2024, as opposed to 60 days, which is the defined deadline (Art. 31b of the Health Insurance Benefits Ordinance).*

Only 6% of all products included in the specialities list in 2024 were added within 60 days.

* If the conditions for accepting the application as defined under Art. 69 (4) of the Health Insurance Benefits Ordinance are met before definitive approval by Swissmedic, the FOPH will normally come to a decision within 60 days of the definitive approval.



**Interval between Swissmedic approval and inclusion in SL**
In days, 2014–2024




Sources: SL, Swissmedic, Calculations by Interpharma, New active substances and new indications 2014–2024, with preliminary approval by Swissmedic (N=397).



# Delays are leading to a backlog of applications

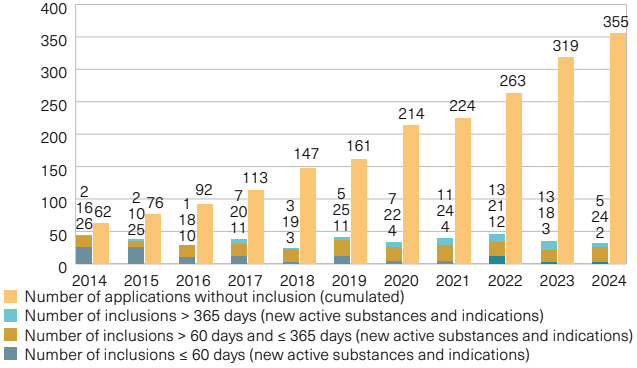
There is a structural problem in Switzerland with respect to rapid and equitable patient access to innovative drugs.

The reason for this is that the standard drug reimbursement system is increasingly reaching its limits with the emergence of novel treatments and groundbreaking advances.

Since 2014, there has been a sharp increase in the number of drugs that have marketing authorization but are not yet reimbursable. This number stood at 355 in 2024. Moreover, 29 out of 31 products (94%) took longer to be added to the specialities list than the 60 days stipulated in the ordinance.



**Interval between Swissmedic approval and inclusion in SL, along with cumulated non-inclusions,** in days, 2014–2024




Sources: SL, Swissmedic, Calculations by Interpharma, New active substances and new indications 2014–2024, with preliminary approval by Swissmedic (N=397).

# Patients benefit from a large number of new active ingredients

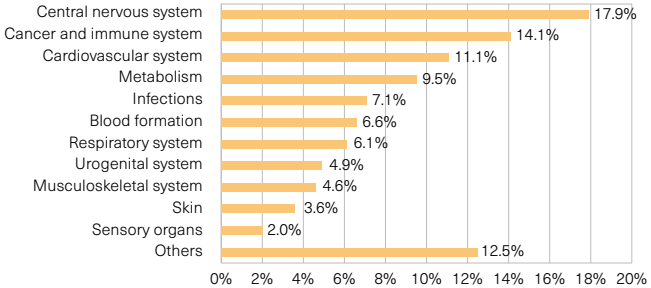
Patients are benefiting from lots of new active ingredients. Based on the number of approved treatments, drugs designed to treat diseases of the nervous system account for around 18% of these treatments, making them the largest category. They include analgesics, antiepileptics and treatments for mental illnesses.

Cancer treatments and immunotherapies account for around 14% of available treatments in Switzerland.

Other major indication areas in 2024 included therapies for cardiovascular diseases (11%) and metabolic diseases (10%).



**Percentage of approved products by indication area**
Total of 10'648 products approved by Swissmedic (excl. homeopathy); Switzerland, 2024




Source: Swissmedic (2025), Authorized human medicinal products, extended list of medicines.



# Total of 10'949 active ingredients in development offer hope

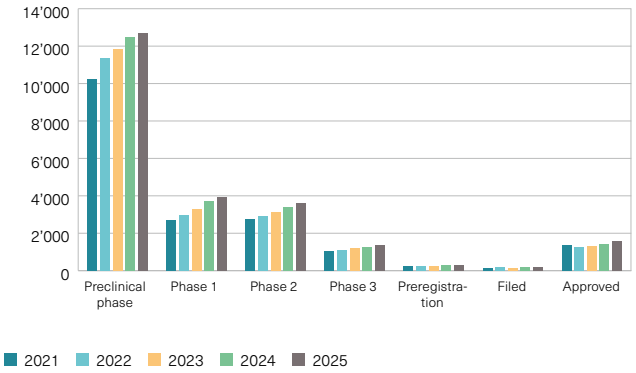
In 2025, a total of 10'949 active ingredients were at development stages close to marketing authorization (excluding the preclinical stage). Compared to the previous year, this represents an increase of around 7.4%.

The portfolio's steady growth reflects both medical advances and the fact that pharmaceutical companies are making large investments in research and development.

New drugs – particularly to treat cancer – are a focus of research activities. But pharmaceutical companies are also continuously looking into new ways of potentially treating infectious diseases, diseases of the central nervous system or respiratory diseases.



**Number of active agents in development stages close to marketing authorization,** global, 2021–2025




Source: Citeline Pharma Intelligence (2025), Pharma R&D 2025 Whitepaper, Pharmaprojects.

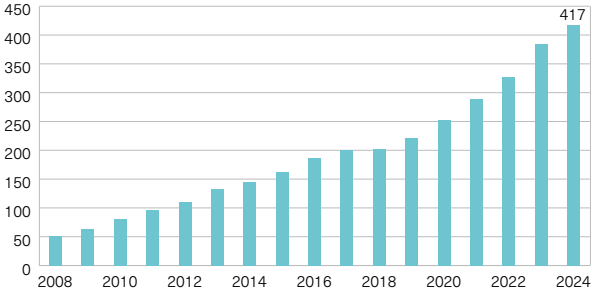
# The number of drugs for rare diseases is on the rise

A disease is considered rare if it affects fewer than five out of 10'000 people. As some 7'000 to 8'000 such diseases have been identified, this is equivalent to half a million people affected in Switzerland alone.

More and more drugs are available specifically for rare diseases (orphan drugs), because many pharmaceutical companies are also developing suitable therapies for small patient groups.

In 2024, there were 234 approved drugs with orphan drug status. They are used in 417 indications – including rare diseases of the immune or nervous systems, rare metabolic disorders and rare forms of cancer.

**Number of indications with orphan drug status in Switzerland**
Total: 234 medicines with orphan drug status 2024




Source: Interpharma calculations based on Swissmedic data (2025), human medicine with status orphan drug.





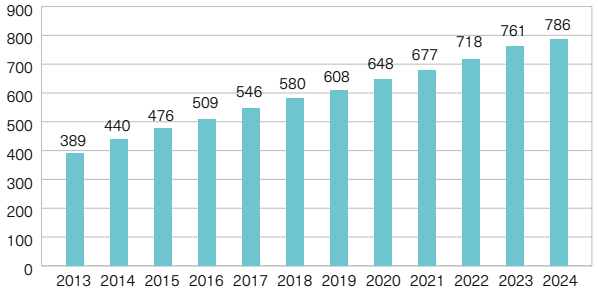
# Pharmaceutical companies are researching an increasing number of rare diseases

Pharmaceutical companies around the world are carrying out intensive research into new drugs and treatments for rare diseases. Despite huge advances in recent years, many rare diseases are still not treatable.

In 2024, companies around the world were investigating 786 different mechanisms of action for tackling various rare diseases – around twice as many as in 2013.

On average, the process for rare diseases – from clinical trial to regulatory approval – takes four years longer than for common conditions. This is due in part to the complex biology, the heterogeneity and the progressive nature of these diseases.

**Number of targets against rare diseases**
Global, number of targets, 2013–2024




Source: Citeline Pharma Intelligence (2025), Pharma R&D 2025 Whitepaper, Pharmaprojects.

# Leading the way in research and development





The pharmaceutical industry is the most important investor, accounting for **31 percent** of total **private-sector research spending** in Switzerland.

Around **45 percent of pharmaceutical research spending** goes to **clinical trials –** but fewer and fewer clinical trials are being conducted in Switzerland.

Although **research activities** in Switzerland have **more than doubled** since 2000, 3R has **reduced** the **number of laboratory animals** by 60 percent to 134’300.

# The long road from laboratory to patient

Pharmaceutical research is a risky undertaking. On average, the development of a new drug takes 12 years, and there is a 95% risk of failure.

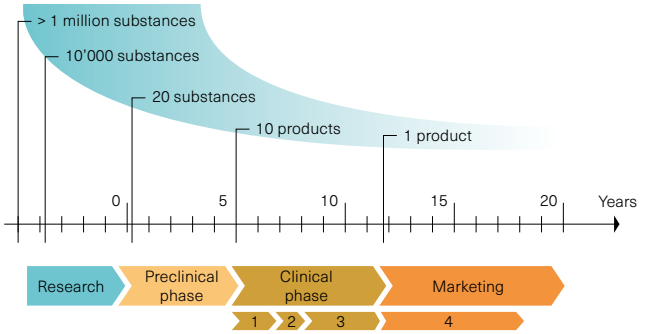
The long, painstaking and strictly regulated process of drug development ensures that the best, safest and most effective drug reaches patients.

Out of more than one million potential substances, approximately 10'000 are investigated in basic research. Only approximately 20 of them reach the preclinical stage. Of these 20 substances, 10 make it to the clinical stage. Only one is eventually sold on the market as a finished preparation.



## Steps in the development of a medicine

Illustration




Source: Interpharma (2025).



# Patent protection enables reinvestment in new drugs

Many development stages and administrative hurdles have to be overcome before a drug is ready for the market. This process is associated with high costs.

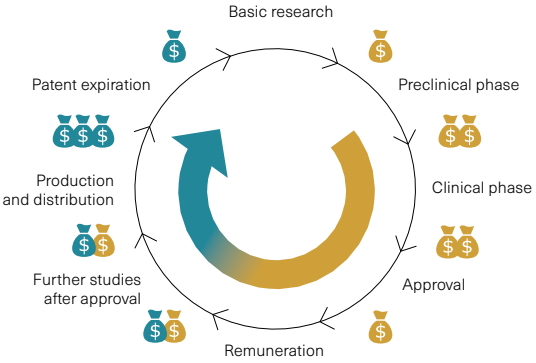
Patent protection often starts in the early stages of development. So, by the time the drug is sold on the market, the patent has already been valid for a good, long while.

Drugs only begin to generate income for companies once the reimbursement decision is made. This income must be high enough so that companies again have the venture capital they need to conduct research into new drugs.



## Research cycle

Illustration




Outer circle: research cycle; inner circle: patent expiry.

Source: Interpharma (2025).

# Drugs appear on the market 10 years after the patent application

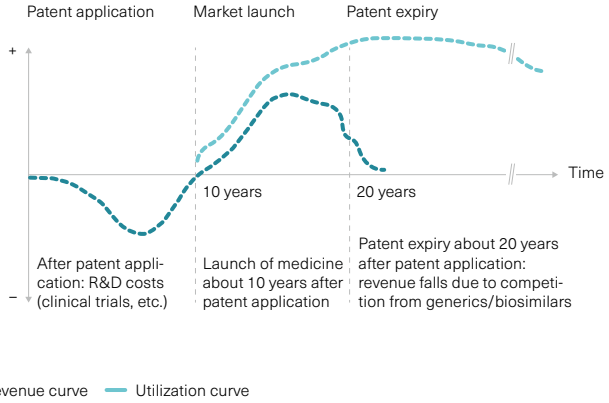
The development of a new drug entails high costs. On average, a drug is not launched on the market until 10 years after the patent application. Only then can a company begin to recoup its costs.

When patent protection expires after approximately another 10 years, the price drops massively – particularly due to me-too products. But patients still benefit from once groundbreaking treatments even years after the patent has expired.

This price decline after patent expiry contributes to sustainable financing of the healthcare system.



## Life cycle innovation model




Source: Interpharma (2025).



# Today's innovations are tomorrow's generics/biosimilars

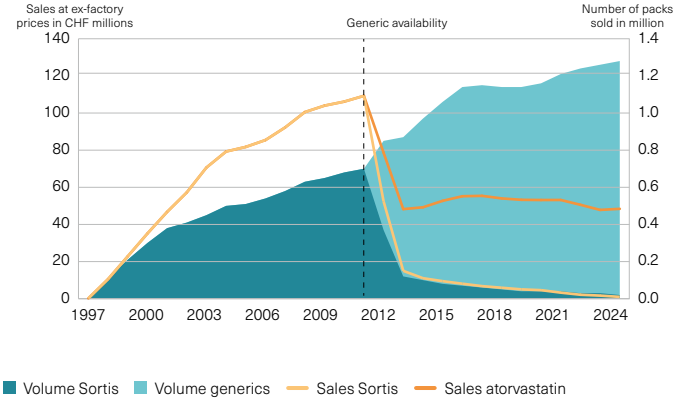
Sortis – a cholesterol-lowering drug – was an innovative blockbuster in 2011 and the top-selling product in Switzerland, generating sales of more than CHF 100 million per year (EFP).

The patent for Sortis expired in 2012, and prices have fallen sharply since then. The cost of the medicine's active ingredient, atorvastatin, has halved to date.

Today, more patients are benefiting from this former innovation – in the form of numerous generics containing atorvastatin as the active ingredient. At the same time, the total costs have fallen significantly.



## Volumes and sales of Sortis (atorvastatin) and generics after patent expiry, 1997–2024




Source: Calculations by Interpharma with data basis IQVIA AG (2025).

# Market incentives improve the supply of antibiotics

Developing new antibiotics is expensive and has a failure rate of 97%. Due to rapid development of resistance, these substances must be used sparingly – and this inhibits a functioning market.

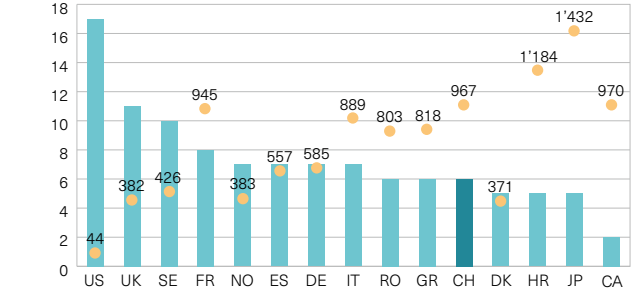
As the development of new antibiotics is risky and unprofitable, countries such as the USA, UK and Sweden rely on incentive schemes. As a result, most of the 18 antibacterial substances approved between 2010 and 2020 were quickly available in those countries.

In Switzerland, only six of these 18 substances were approved in the same period – and reached the market with a delay of over 2.5 years.



## Availability of antibiotics in international comparison

Number of launches and median launch delay, in days
2010–2020




* Authorizations considered until 31.12.2019; market launches considered until 31.12.2020.

Source: Illustration based on the Supplementary Materials by Outterson et al. (2021), Patent Access in 14 High-Income Countries to New Antibacterials Approved by the US Food and Drug Administration, European Medicines Agency, Japanese Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency, or Health Canada, 2010–2020. For Switzerland: Extended list of medicinal products from Swissmedic and information from marketing authorization holders in Switzerland (Ecoplan research).



# A low success rate makes drug development costly

Pharmaceutical companies run a high risk of loss when developing a new drug. Between 1998 and 2021, there were 198 unsuccessful attempts to develop an Alzheimer's drug. The failure rate is 98%.

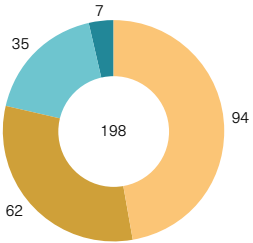
It is estimated that between 1995 and 2021 alone, more than USD 58.5 billion were spent on Alzheimer's research.

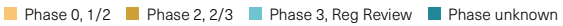
When a drug is successful, companies must be able to fund research into unsuccessful drugs too. Without this cross-subsidization, there would not be enough funds to conduct research into new drugs.



## Unsuccessful Investigational Alzheimer's Drug

By phase, 1998–2021




Source: PhRMA Analysis of Adis R&D Insight Database, May 2021.

# A new drug requires billions in investment

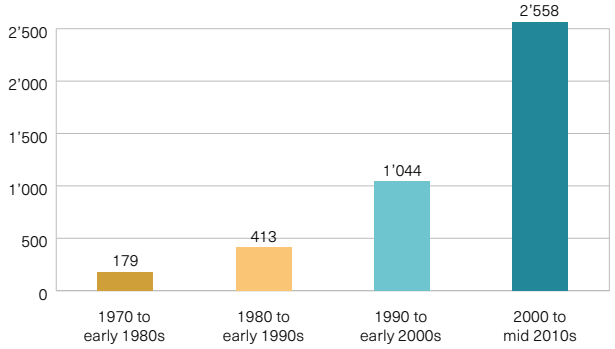
On average, it takes around 12 years for a new drug to be ready for the market – and the high failure rate means this is a high-risk business.

From research and development to market readiness, the process costs an average of USD 2.6 billion. However, depending on the disease complex and the company involved, the costs can be significantly higher.

Today, the development of a new drug is therefore some two-and-a-half times more expensive than it was in the 1990s and 14 times more expensive than it was in the 1970s.



**Cost of development up to market readiness**
Average development costs in million US dollars




Source: Joseph A. DiMasi, Henry G. Grabowski, Ronald W. Hansen, Innovation in the pharmaceutical industry: New estimates of R&D costs, Journal of Health Economics, 47 (2016), 20–33.



# The pharmaceutical industry invests above-average sums in research and development

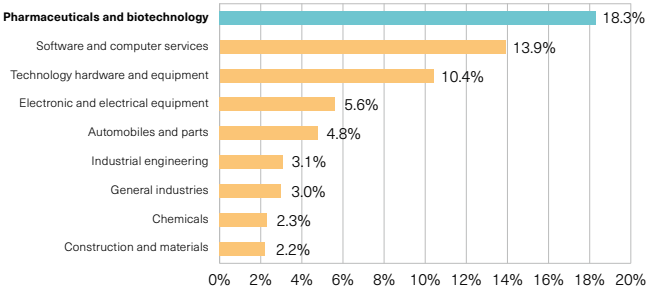
Research intensity provides an indication of the percentage of generated sales that flows back into research and development.

The pharmaceutical and biotech industries invest just over 18% of sales straight back into researching and developing new products. This is a leading figure in comparison with other industries.

The pharmaceutical industry thus invests significantly more than other innovative industries such as the software, computer services and technology hardware sectors.



**Average research and development intensity**
As a percentage of sales, 2023




Source: European Commission, The 2023 EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard (2024).

# Return on research investment reflects risk

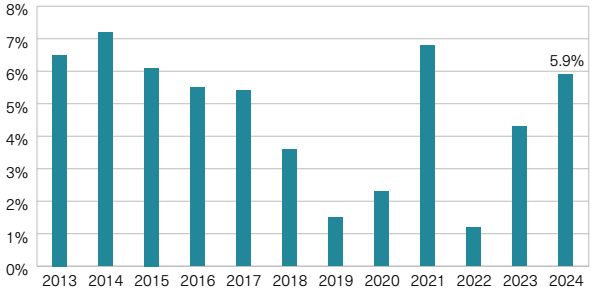
The return on investment in research and development (R&D) for the world's 20 largest pharmaceutical companies was 5.9% in 2024.

Studies show that risk-weighted returns in the pharmaceutical industry are lower than in comparable industries. Moreover, steadily rising R&D costs continue to represent a challenge for the companies.

As the development of new drugs becomes increasingly complex and costly, pharmaceutical companies are having to revamp their research processes. Digitalization and new technologies are helping to achieve this.



**Return on research investment**
Global, 2013–2024




Source: Deloitte (2025), Unleash AI's potential, Measuring the return from pharmaceutical innovation – 15th edition.



# More than a third of private spending on research and development is borne by the pharmaceutical industry

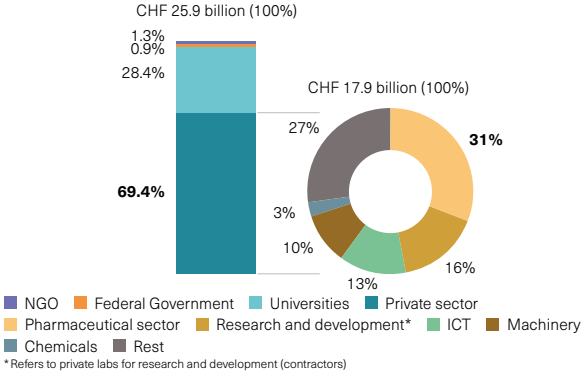
In 2023, a total of CHF 25.9 billion was invested in research and development (R&D) in Switzerland.

Around 70% of these investments came from the private sector. The pharmaceutical industry is the most important investor, accounting for 31% of private-sector research spending. Other important research industries include the ICT and mechanical engineering sectors.

The importance of the pharmaceutical industry is highly underrated, because external research contracts also fund a large percentage of laboratories and research institutions that fall under "research and development".



**Total research and development expenditure**
Overall investment of public and private sector; private sector broken down by industry, 2021




Source: Federal Statistical Office (2025), Research and Development in Switzerland 2023.

# The private sector conducts 75 percent of applied research in Switzerland

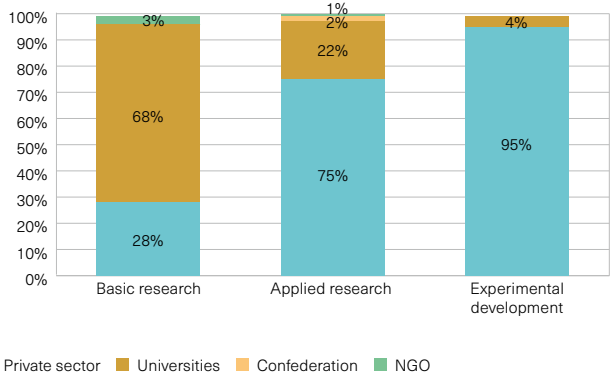
Research spending (2023: CHF 25.9 billion) is split into basic research, applied research and experimental development.

The private sector conducts 28% of basic research in Switzerland, while 68% is carried out by universities.

The private sector conducts 75% of applied research. When it comes to experimental development, as much as 95% of research is carried out by the private sector.



## Breakdown of research activities by field
2023




Source: Federal Statistical Office (2025), Research and Development in Switzerland 2023.



# The pharmaceutical industry invests USD 190 billion worldwide in new drugs

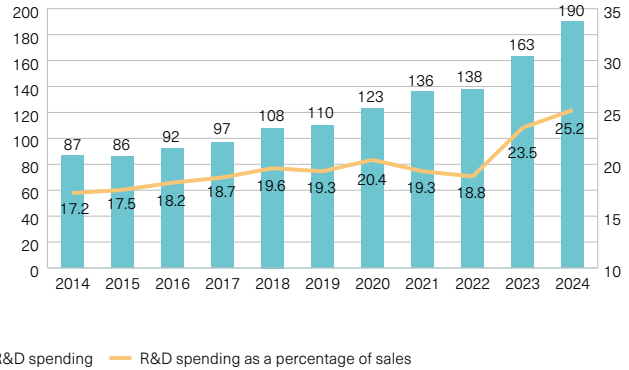
Taken together, the world's 15 largest pharmaceutical companies invested around USD 190 billion in research and development in 2024.

Research spending has more than doubled compared to 2014.

According to the study, more than a quarter of revenues in 2024 went into research and development. This is a record figure, even in a cross-industry comparison.



## Expenditure on research and development
In USD billions, 2014–2024




Source: IQVIA (2025), Global Trends in R&D 2025.

# Almost half of all research spending goes towards clinical trials

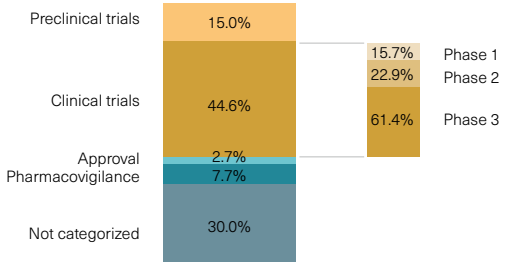
Around 45% of pharmaceutical research spending goes towards clinical trials that test the efficacy and safety of drugs for humans in phases 1 to 3.

Before drugs can be used in humans, they undergo preclinical testing for efficacy and safety in animals. These tests are required by law to protect humans from undesirable side effects.

After launch, new drugs continue to be monitored to ensure their safety.



## Distribution of research expenditure by operations
2024




Source: PhRMA, Annual Membership Survey 2025.



# Clinical trials enable early access to innovative drugs

Switzerland has a long tradition of conducting clinical research.

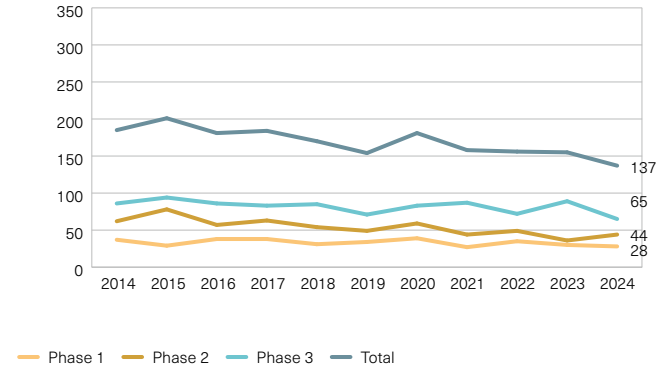
In 2024, Swissmedic gave the green light for 137 clinical trials in Switzerland.

The framework conditions in Switzerland are not ideal for clinical research. This is reflected in the decreasing number of clinical trials.

An attractive environment for clinical research requires efficient processes, modern digital infrastructure and access to health data, as well as innovation-friendly authorities and framework conditions.



## Clinical drug trials definitively approved by Swissmedic
2007–2024




Source: Swissmedic (2025).

# Switzerland is lagging behind in clinical trials

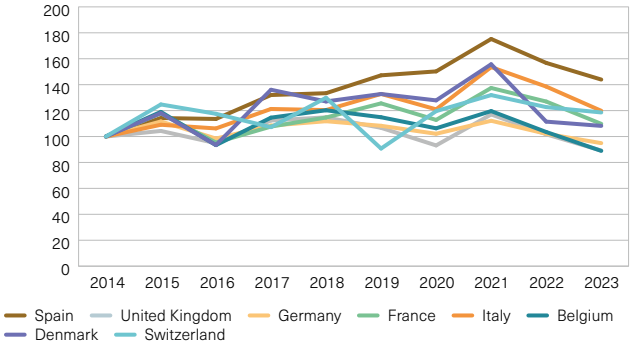
Nowadays, clinical research for drugs is usually conducted in several countries at the same time. On the one hand, this is done to minimize the influence that local factors might have on the trial results, and on the other it is done to find enough participants.

For Switzerland as a research hub, being involved in many clinical trials is crucially important. Yet while the number of clinical trials has increased in countries such as Spain and Italy, Switzerland cannot benefit from the Covid-related peak in 2021 in the long term.

This means missed investments, less innovation and a gradual loss of Switzerland's leading role.



**Trend in the number of clinical trials (phases 1-3) in Switzerland compared with selected European countries,** 2014–2023




Indexed: 2014 = 100

Source: ClinicalTrials.gov; Early Phase 1, 1, 2, 3, Interventional studies, Funded by Industry. Study start from 01/31/2014 to 12/31/2023. Accessed on 30. October 2025.



# More R&D spending, more clinical trials – but not in Switzerland

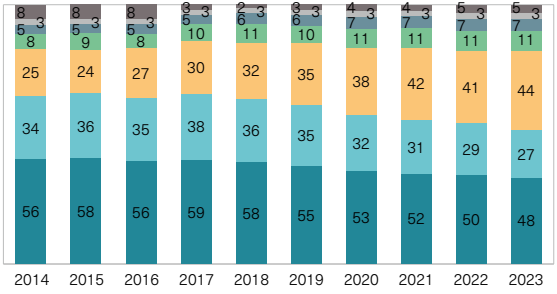
While clinical trials increased by almost 10% globally between 2018 and 2023, the number in Switzerland fell by 5.5%.

Fewer and fewer clinical trials are taking place without patients from Switzerland, and fewer and fewer Swiss healthcare professionals are involved in the clinical development of new drugs.

This decline jeopardizes the attractiveness of Switzerland as a research location and weakens the supply of innovative therapies for patients.



**Percentage share of global clinical trials (phases 1-3) by region** 2014–2023




Note: Since many clinical trials are conducted in several regions simultaneously, the percentages add up to more than 100 percent.

Source: ClinicalTrials.gov; Early Phase 1, 1, 2, 3, Interventional studies, Funded by Industry. Study start from 01/31/2014 to 12/31/2023. Accessed on 30. October 2025.

# More research – less animal testing thanks to 3R

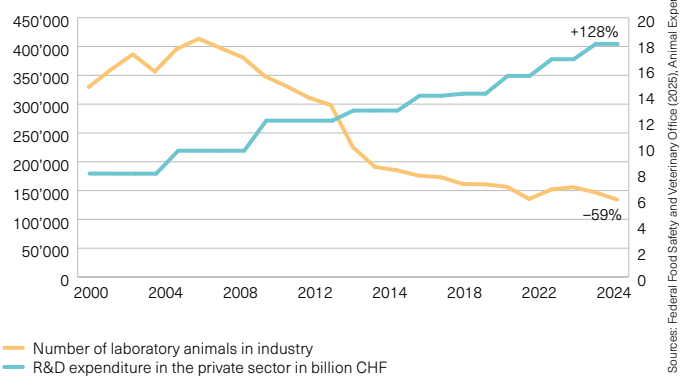
The 3R principles aim to “replace” animal experiments, “reduce” the number of animals and minimize their impact (“refine”).

Although research activities in Switzerland have more than doubled since 2000, 3R has reduced the number of laboratory animals by 59% to 134’300.

For new drugs to work safely, research on animals remains necessary – but it is only permitted if there are no alternatives.



**Number of laboratory animals and research and development expenditure in Switzerland,** 2000–2024




Sources: Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (2025), Animal Experiment Statistics and Federal Statistical Office (2025), R&D Expenditure by the Private Sector.



# Switzerland is a leader when it comes to filing patents

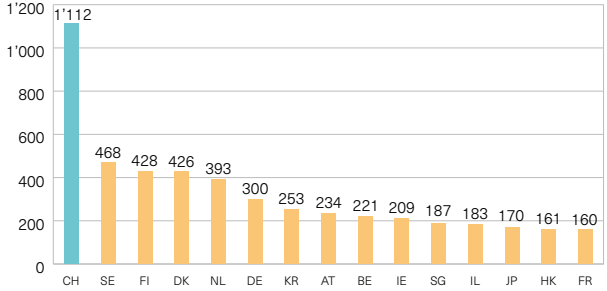
Swiss companies filed 9’996 patents in 2024. Relative to the population, this is an absolute record. Switzerland has over 1’112 applications per million inhabitants.

Sweden (in second place) recorded 468 applications per million inhabitants. Finland ranked third in the international comparison with 428 patent applications.

For the pharmaceutical industry, patents are an essential prerequisite to ensure that funds can still be reinvested in research and development.



**Patent applications**
Per million inhabitants, 2024




Sources: European Patent Office (2025), Patent Index 2024.

# Swiss universities benefit from patent agreements

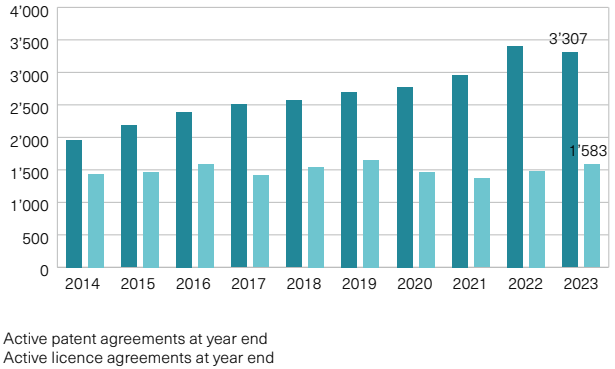
Research collaboration between private and public sector institutions is the key element for innovation. Both academia and the private sector benefit from knowledge sharing, the use of synergies and access to talented individuals.

According to the swiTTreport survey, there were as many as 4'890 such research cooperation projects in Switzerland in 2023. The 3'307 patent agreements accounted for the lion's share of this.

When companies fall back on existing patents in research and development activities, they pay license fees. Because patent or license holders are often universities, the funds invested flow back into the public purse through such agreements.



**Aggregated data on research at Swiss universities and research institutes,** 2014–2023




Source: swiTT (2024), swiTTreport 2023.



# Collaborative research via the EU programmes is indispensable

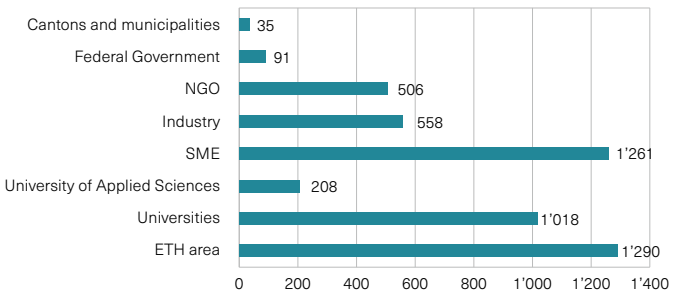
International networking in collaborative research is indispensable for Switzerland as a location.

In 2023, there were 4'967 Swiss projects involved in the Horizon programme. Almost half of this number was attributable to projects at Swiss universities, and around a quarter to SMEs.

Horizon is crucial for Switzerland because it involves all players in the innovation ecosystem in cutting-edge international research, promotes collaborations and thus secures the country's competitiveness.



**Horizon 2020: project participation of Switzerland**
Year 2023




Source: State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI).

# Strong economic policy framework





In total, **for every Swiss franc of sales** in the pharmaceutical industry in Switzerland, around **CHF 3.20** flows back in the form of taxes and investments.

With exports to the tune of **CHF 114 billion** and accounting for **40.5 percent** of total exports, the pharmaceutical industry is **Switzerland's** most important export sector.

Some **300'000 people** in Switzerland work in or for the pharmaceutical industry.

# Pharmaceutical companies bring in CHF 10 billion a year to Switzerland as a business location

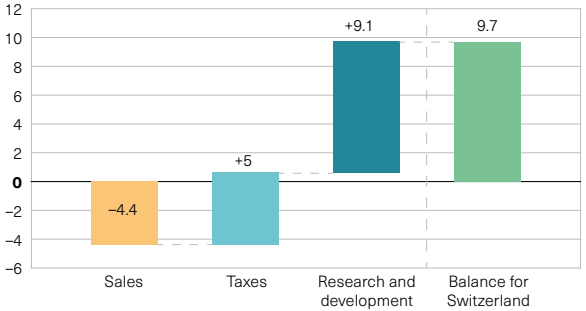
Interpharma's members generate CHF 4.4 billion in sales in Switzerland – and, with CHF 5 billion in taxes and levies, pay more in than they collect through the healthcare system.

Furthermore, the companies invest CHF 9 billion annually in research and development, thereby securing jobs and Switzerland's position as an innovation hub.

In total, for every Swiss franc of sales, roughly CHF 3.20 is returned in taxes and investments – a net benefit of almost CHF 10 billion per year for Switzerland as a business location.



**Interpharma companies in Switzerland: sales and research**
In CHF billions, 2024




Source: Interpharma (2025).



# Switzerland is very competitive, but has strong competition

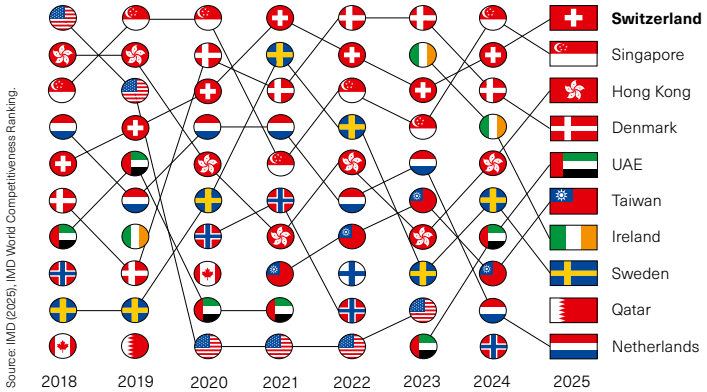
In the IMD World Competitiveness Ranking, Switzerland took the top spot in 2025, edging Singapore and Hong Kong.

Ideal framework conditions are absolutely essential if a business location is to be successful and competitive.

However, the attractiveness of the location is under pressure: growing geopolitical uncertainty, uncertainties regarding bilateral agreements with the EU and rising bureaucracy and regulatory costs are endangering Switzerland's competitiveness.



**IMD World Competitiveness Ranking**
2018–2025




Source: IMD (2025), IMD World Competitiveness Ranking.

# Investments in research and development need planning security and legal certainty

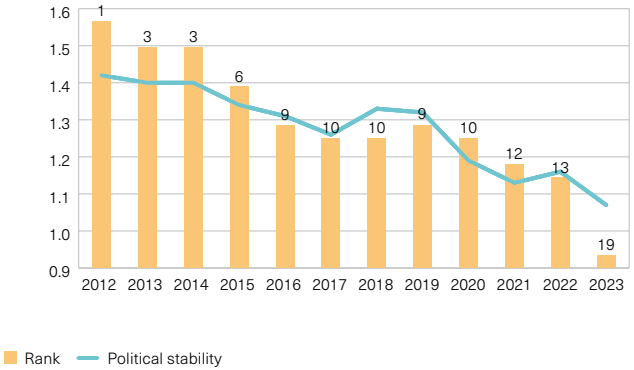
Political stability and legal certainty are traditionally important strengths of Switzerland as a location. However, Switzerland has steadily lost ground to other countries in recent years, falling to 19th place in 2022.

Innovative industries with a long investment horizon are particularly dependent on planning security and legal certainty.

When it comes to attracting new companies or investing in a location, political stability is an important factor in opting for a location.



**Ranking of Switzerland in the Political Stability Index** 2012–2023




Source: Daniel Kaufmann and Aart Kraay (2024), Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2023 Update.



# High potential of artificial intelligence for Switzerland

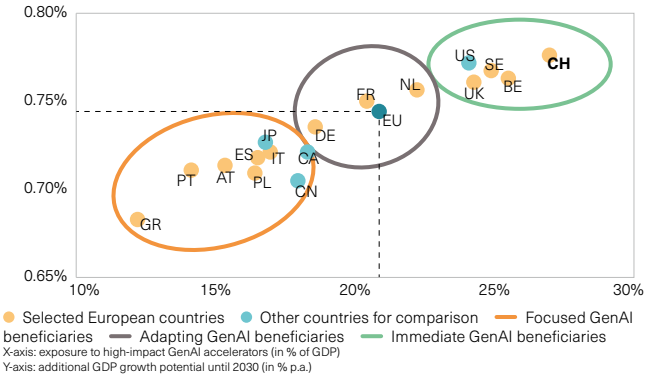
Compared with other European countries, Switzerland's economy stands to benefit significantly from generative artificial intelligence, as industries with high productivity potential in this area make a considerable contribution to Swiss GDP.

The healthcare sector is particularly well positioned to benefit from the potential of artificial intelligence.

Research and development driven by GenAI can be used for targeted and tailor-made cancer treatment. The technology could also be used to boost efficiency in high-tech pharmaceutical production.



**High potential of generative artificial intelligence for Switzerland,** 2024




Source: Strategy&, Embracing the GenAIOpportunity.

# Direct investment in Switzerland on the decline

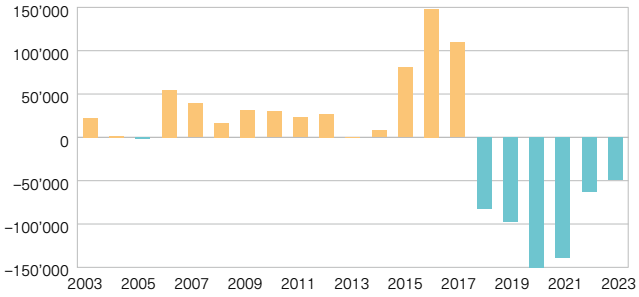
To measure the strength and attractiveness of a location, it is instructive to take a look at direct investments from abroad.

Until 2017, Switzerland recorded significant capital inflows (peak year 2016). Since then, however, there has been a significant outflow of funds – a cumulative total of CHF 560 billion in 2018–2023 alone, including CHF 49 billion in 2023 (2022: CHF 63 billion).

These outflows threaten jobs, innovation, tax revenues and the international competitiveness of Switzerland as a business location.



**Foreign direct investment in Switzerland**
In CHF billions, 2003–2023




Source : Swiss National Bank (SNB).



# Investment in start-ups is falling again

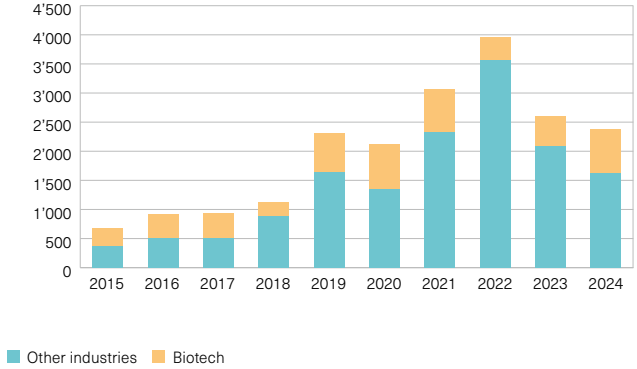
Another important indicator of location attractiveness is investment in start-ups: a successful location has a network of universities, globally active companies and young start-ups.

In 2022, investments in Swiss start-ups peaked at CHF 3.5 billion. Since then, the amount of capital invested has been declining again.

While almost half of all investments in 2017 went to start-ups in the biotech sector, in 2024 the figure fell to 31%. This indicates declining attractiveness in this area.



**Investments in Swiss start-ups**
In CHF millions, 2015–2024




Source: Swiss Venture Capital Report 2025.

# The pharmaceutical sector is Switzerland's most important export industry

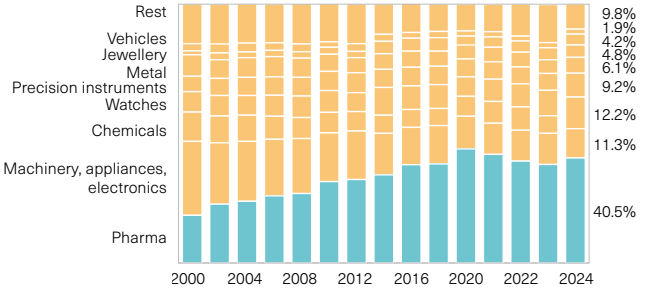
With exports worth around CHF 114 billion, accounting for 40.5% (2024) of total exports, the pharmaceutical industry is Switzerland's most important export sector.

The pharmaceutical industry has significantly increased its export share over the past 20 years, but has been stagnating for some time.

The pharmaceutical industry exports as much as the MEM (machinery, electrical engineering and metals) industry, the watchmaking industry and the chemical industry combined.



**Nominal exports in selected industries as percentage of total exports,** 2000–2024




Source: Federal Office for Customs and Border Security FOCBS (2025).



# Europe is the most important sales market for Switzerland's pharmaceutical industry

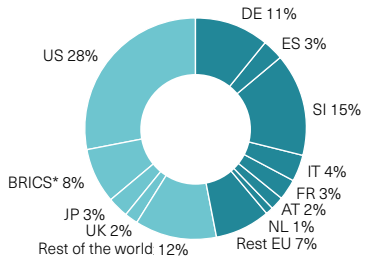
In 2024, around 46% of Swiss pharmaceutical exports went to the European Union, making the EU the most important market for pharmaceutical products.

The USA accounts for 28% of exports and is therefore the single most important country. Exports to the USA have more than doubled from 12.8% over the past 20 years or so.

Slovenia, another important production location, has overtaken Germany (11%) as the second-largest customer at 15%.



**Share of pharmaceutical exports**
By destination, in percent, 2024




Source: Federal Office for Customs and Border Security FOCBS (2025).

EU member states (46%) States or markets outside the EU (54%)

* Incl. Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran (members of the BRICS Group since 2024)

# Employment growth in the pharmaceutical industry is weakening

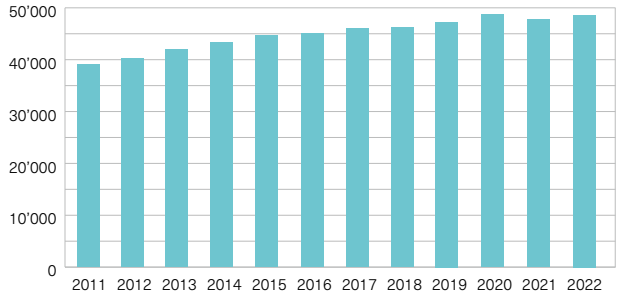
In the last two decades, the number of full-time equivalents employed in the pharmaceutical industry has doubled to around 48'600 employees.

However, strong employment growth has slowed steadily in recent years.

If the pharmaceutical industry is to continue creating lots of attractive jobs, it needs good framework conditions set out in economic policy.



**Number of people employed in the pharma industry**
Full-time equivalents, 2011–2022




Source: Federal Statistical Office (2025).



# Value creation: pharmaceutical industry driving growth

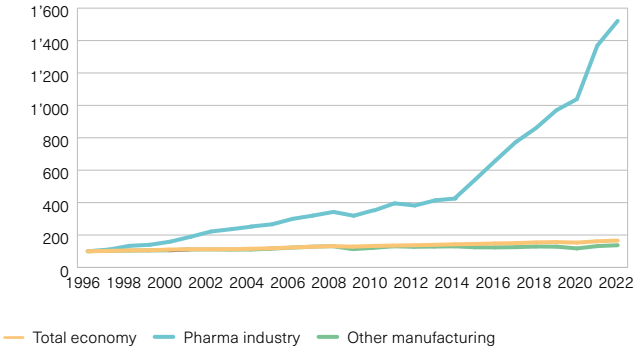
Since 1996, real value creation in the Swiss pharmaceutical industry has increased enormously and is now 15 times higher than it was then.

By way of comparison, the economy as a whole grew by 66% over the same period, while other industry grew by 37%.

From restructuring in the mid-1990s to a strong global leader, the pharmaceutical sector has become Switzerland's primary engine of growth. But this position is in acute danger – Switzerland cannot rest on its laurels.



**Development of the real gross value added**
Indexed, 1996–2022




Source: BAK Economics (2024).

Note: index, 1996 = 100.

# Switzerland is an attractive destination for talented individuals

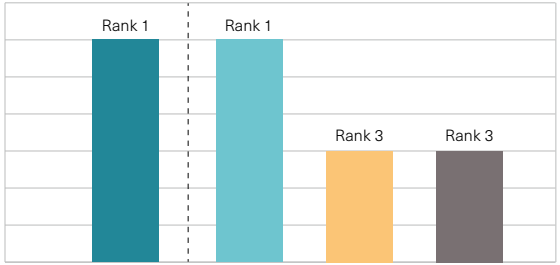
A key prerequisite for an innovative location is access to skilled workers and talent.

The World Talent Ranking measures a country's ability to attract, develop and retain talent. Switzerland comes in first place, ahead of Luxembourg and Iceland.

Thanks to its outstanding education system, good living conditions and high levels of investment in education, Switzerland attracts the best minds from around the world and thus secures its competitiveness and prosperity.



**Labour Market Competetiveness**
2024




Overall | Investment and development | Appeal | Readiness

Source: IMD World Talent Ranking (2025).



# Switzerland is dependent on cross-border commuters

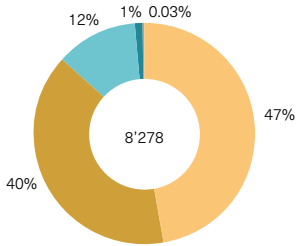
Every day, some 400'000 cross-border commuters travel from neighbouring countries to their jobs in Switzerland. Thanks to the bilateral agreements, people on both sides of the border benefit from less bureaucracy and simpler rules in their everyday lives.

The pharmaceutical industry is particularly dependent on cross-border commuters. Around 8'300 such commuters are employed in the industry, meaning that one in five employees in the pharmaceutical sector travels to Switzerland for work.

Regions such as Basel are especially reliant on the free movement of people running well, due to both their geographical location and historical links with border regions.



**Cross-border commuters in the pharmaceutical sector**
By country of origin, 2024




France | Germany | Italy | Austria | Liechtenstein

Source: Federal Statistical Office (2025).

# The pharmaceutical industry is the engine of Switzerland's economy

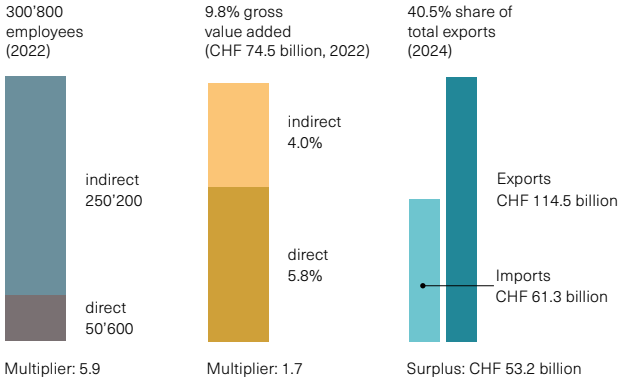
In 2022, the pharmaceutical industry employed around 50'600 people in Switzerland. The industry obtains products and services such as machinery, chemical substances, cleaning and security staff, insurance services and energy as part of its activities – creating an additional 250'200 jobs for people in other sectors.

The pharmaceutical industry generates 5.8% of Switzerland's gross value added. When indirect effects are taken into account, this rises to 9.8%.

The pharmaceutical industry's trade surplus amounts to CHF 53.2 billion – making it the driving force behind the Swiss economy.



## Employees, gross value added and share of total exports of the pharmaceutical industry




Source: BAK Economics (2024), The Importance of the Pharmaceutical Industry for Switzerland; Federal Statistical Office (2024); Federal Office for Customs and Border Security FOCBS (2025).

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