

«Research on infectious diseases also helps to keep me and the neighbour's cat safe too. Woof!»



Ada  
ISPM Team

#### Contact

BReady Project Management  
University of Bern  
Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine (ISPM)  
Mittelstrasse 43  
3012 Bern, Switzerland

Phone: +41 79 804 00 68

Email: [BReady.mcid@unibe.ch](mailto:BReady.mcid@unibe.ch)

[www.BReady.unibe.ch](http://www.BReady.unibe.ch)

#### The MCID

BReady is a part of the Multidisciplinary Center for Infectious Diseases (MCID) at the University of Bern. The MCID was founded in January 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with the generous support of the Vinetum Foundation. The purpose of the MCID is to identify risks of infection, promote interdisciplinary research on future epidemics and pandemics, and increase preparedness to better manage them.

Swiss Institute for Translational and Entrepreneurial Medicine

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## Getting Bern ready for future pandemics

Find out more about this large, long-term study from the University of Bern and discover how you, as an adult with or without children and pets, can take part.



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«BEready aims to collect important data from 1500 households across Bern. By doing so, we will improve our knowledge of infectious diseases and be better prepared for new health threats.»

**Prof. Dr. med. Gilles Wandeler**  
Co-Lead of the BEready study

## Welcome to BEready!

This is an exciting opportunity to contribute to pioneering research from the University of Bern. BEready (Bern, get ready) is a large, long-term study which will involve 1500 households in the Canton of Bern.

BEready will help us to respond effectively to future pandemics, epidemics and infectious diseases. As a participant in the study, you will be making a major contribution to this effort.

## Why do we need BEready?

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic showed us how a lack of preparation can lead to a crisis, which can quickly spread across the whole world. This resulted in restrictions that brought everyday life to a standstill and ultimately led to more than 14,000 deaths in Switzerland (as of November 2023). The pandemic also showed us how difficult it is to efficiently and effectively fight infections without data. We want to change this.

## Who is behind the BEready study?

We are a team of researchers in human and veterinary medicine. We are supported by study nurses and experts in social sciences and other disciplines.

We work at the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine at the University of Bern, in the Inselspital hospital (infectious diseases clinic and sitem-insel), and in the small animal clinic of the Vetsuisse Faculty in Bern.



«Households with pets are very important for us too. This is because a lot of infectious diseases are transmitted between animals and people.»

**Prof. Dr. med. vet. Simone Schuller**  
Co-Lead of the BEready study

## How BEready works

BEready aims to include 1500 households. Any household in the Canton of Bern can join. Children and pets are a plus but not a must. How will it work in practice?



### Registration

You can sign up on our website: [www.BEready.unibe.ch](http://www.BEready.unibe.ch).

### Initial in-person visit

At the start of the study, participants will have a brief physical checkup and give a blood sample (from the arm). This takes place at sitem-insel or in your region. For dogs and cats, the blood sample is taken at the small animal clinic or at a veterinary practice in the region (no blood sample for other pets). Travelling expenses will be reimbursed.

### Follow-up

The effort required for participants is low. Immediately after the initial visit and annually thereafter, participants complete an online questionnaire about their current state of health and factors that may make them more susceptible to infections or protect against them. They also take a small blood sample from their fingertip at home every year. From time to time, participants are asked to send a swab or sample to BEready and complete a short online questionnaire if they have certain illnesses (e.g. cold in humans, diarrhoea in dogs and cats). Materials and postage are provided by BEready.

### Duration

For this long-term study, we hope that households will take part for several years. However, participants may leave the study at any time.

### Effort and participation

Participation in BEready is always voluntary. Participants and their health insurance will incur no costs. There will be no payment for taking part. If they wish, study participants can receive regular information on the research results and events related to BEready.

### Ethical aspects and data protection

BEready will be conducted in accordance with Swiss law, and all applicable internationally recognised guidelines will be followed. The responsible Ethics Committee and competent veterinary authority have reviewed and approved the research project. All collected data will be subject to strict data protection requirements.

**We look forward to hearing from you!**