



REPORTS 2025: GERMANY, AUSTRIA, SWITZERLAND

Background:

Annual numbers of reported tick-borne encephalitis (TBE) cases fluctuate considerably in Central Europe. Final national data for 2025 have recently been published, either through dedicated surveillance reports (Germany, Austria) or via the public surveillance dashboard of the Federal Office of Public Health (Switzerland).

Results:

Germany

In 2025, a total of 693 TBE cases were reported in Germany, representing the third-highest annual case number since the start of nationwide data collection in 2001 (highest: 718 cases in 2020; second highest: 695 cases in 2024). This figure substantially exceeds the long-term annual median of approximately 420 cases. No fatal cases were reported.

Most cases occurred in Bavaria (220 cases; 40.1%), followed by Baden-Württemberg (209 cases; 38.1%) and Saxony (45 cases; 8.2%). Additional risk areas were reported in Hesse, Thuringia, Brandenburg, Lower Saxony, Saarland, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Rhineland-Palatinate.

Two new TBE risk areas were designated in 2025: Landkreis Nordsachsen and Stadtkreis Halle (Saxony-Anhalt). As a result, 185 counties are currently designated as TBE risk areas by the Robert Koch Institut (RKI). Outside these designated risk areas, sporadic cases were reported across several federal states. Hamburg remains the only federal state without any documented TBE cases to date.

Approximately 98% of cases occurred in individuals who were unvaccinated, incompletely vaccinated, or missing booster doses. Vaccination coverage remained low in high-incidence regions, including Bavaria (22.6%), Baden-Württemberg (17.2%), Thuringia (27.6%), and Hesse (18.0%). Vaccination rates were only marginally higher in

the 63 counties with the highest TBE incidence compared with counties reporting low incidence.

Vaccination-induced protection was highest among children and adolescents, while coverage among young adults, adults, and older individuals remained substantially lower. This is of particular concern, as older adults face a significantly increased risk of severe disease, complications, and long-term neurological sequelae. Reported barriers to vaccination include low perceived disease risk and concerns about vaccine adverse effects.

Austria

In 2025, 132 hospitalized TBE cases were reported in Austria, consistent with the range observed during the previous five years. In addition, 26 TBE virus infections were diagnosed in ambulatory patients.

Most cases were reported from Upper Austria ($n = 53$). The youngest patient was 18 months old (meningoencephalitis), while the oldest patient was 86 years old (febrile illness).

Switzerland

In 2025, 503 TBE cases were reported in Switzerland, representing the highest annual number recorded to date (previous maximum: 433 cases in 2020). The national incidence exceeded 5 cases per 100,000 population.

Case numbers peaked in June, with a secondary, smaller peak observed in October, consistent with seasonal tick activity patterns.

Discussion:

In Central Europe, the burden of TBE remained high in 2025, as demonstrated by the exceptionally high case numbers reported in Germany and Switzerland.

The comparatively lower number of reported cases in Austria, particularly when contrasted with neighboring countries such as the Czech Republic and Switzerland, and with the German federal



KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES ON TBE, GERMANY

state of Bavaria, can be largely attributed to Austria's high TBE vaccination coverage. However, among unvaccinated individuals, the risk of TBE virus infection and disease incidence remain high, underscoring the continued relevance of vaccination (e.g., national surveillance newsletters, October 2025).

Conclusion:

There is an urgent need to substantially increase TBE vaccination coverage in Germany and Switzerland. In Austria, high vaccination uptake, including timely booster doses, must be maintained, while further efforts should aim to improve vaccination acceptability and long-term adherence.

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