

12 months – 12 actions campaign

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Background and context

As specialists of the individual, we, family physicians (pediatricians and general internists), are well acquainted with the family, economic, social, professional, and natural environments in which our patients live. We maintain relationships of trust and proximity with them, enabling us to analyze, discuss, advise, and provide care while taking into account the overall reality of a given territory. Prevention is one of the pillars of our approach. We therefore wished to provide family physicians with tools to become ambassadors of behaviors that promote planetary health, with the aim of improving population health. These co-benefits—by changing our dietary habits, modes of mobility, and contact with nature—allow us to simultaneously improve the health of our planet and our own health, fostering a virtuous cycle.

Project implementation

With the help of physicians and medical students who are particularly sensitive to environmental protection, we selected 12 actions to develop. The 12 topics chosen are:

1. contact with nature,
2. active mobility,
3. food quality,
4. avoiding unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions,
5. fewer diagnostic tests,
6. less polluting medical devices,
7. physical activity,
8. upper respiratory tract infections, prioritizing natural treatments,
9. reducing meat consumption,
10. less screen time,
11. reducing non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs,
12. prioritizing prevention.

For each topic, scientific sources (partly specific to the Swiss context) were compiled, and short evidence-based texts describe the scientific rationale and concrete actions to be taken. Graphic designers then produced infographics that systematically include an introductory text, a description of the benefits for health and for the planet, situations in which to address the topic, a “green prescription,” and scientific references. Each month, one action was highlighted in the *Revue Médicale Suisse* (the most widely read medical journal in French-speaking Switzerland) through a dedicated page, provided in large format for display in medical practices and available for free download in all 4 languages from the journal’s website: <https://www.revmed.ch/12mois12actions>

Thus, the 12 actions for the 12 months of the year were proposed to patients in our practices in 2024. Physicians were encouraged to seize the opportunity each month to address these topics with patients, in order to raise awareness, motivate them, and engage them in the global behavioral changes necessary to halt the deterioration of our planet and, consequently, of our own health.

To enable broader dissemination, we translated the infographics into German and Italian, the predominant national languages in Switzerland, as well as into English to allow for more international dissemination.

In 2025, we developed short video sequences of one and a half minutes summarizing the key messages. These videos were broadcast for one week per month in Geneva public transport and on certain local trains.

Project aims

The project aims to:

- support prevention and health promotion for the population;
- preserve the natural resources used by the healthcare system;
- combat climate change by reducing resource use and the environmental impact of the healthcare system;
- train healthcare professionals in evidence-based data in the field of planetary health;
- provide the population with the opportunity to change behavior for their own health and for the health of the planet;
- innovate through a motivating and stimulating action (non-judgmental and non-guilt-inducing).

Project objectives

Economic domain: reducing resource use, medication prescriptions, and diagnostic tests, and developing preventive measures with a reduction in the incidence of cardiovascular, respiratory, endocrine, orthopedic, and other diseases should reduce healthcare costs.

Social domain: population health should improve overall. Through the infographics displayed in medical practices, we hope to foster social and intergenerational connections by encouraging discussion. Through the promotion of good practices (active mobility, food quality, reduced screen exposure, contact with nature, etc.), we aim to achieve greater social awareness. In pediatric practices, we seek to influence behavior changes in future generations.

Environmental domain: reducing resource use and the environmental impact of the healthcare system will contribute to environmental preservation.

Expected outcomes

The expected outcome is the training of physicians and the dissemination of scientific information and the body of literature describing the current state of knowledge on the links between health and the environment, as well as possible actions to address the environmental crisis, both among healthcare professionals and patients.

An increased awareness among the population that everyone can protect their own health and that of ecosystems through simple, easy actions.

Master's theses were conducted with students from the Faculty of Medicine to evaluate

patient acceptability of the infographics and their usability in medical practices. (Dr Bideau and Professor Sommer are lecturers at the Faculty of Medicine, and Professor Sommer, along with other faculty members, supervises master's theses at the Faculty of Medicine in connection with this project.)

Financial aspects and costs

The development of the infographics was carried out on a voluntary basis by the project leaders in collaboration with a group of practicing physicians and medical students.

Revue Médicale Suisse covered the financial costs related to graphic design, printing, and online publication of the French-language infographics.

Translation into German and Italian, as well as video development and broadcasting in public transport, were funded through support from the Canton of Geneva and private foundations. The Italian translation was funded by the Canton of Ticino.

Future development plans

The campaign will be disseminated at the national level in Switzerland in 2026.

The project may be continued in subsequent years after incorporating improvements suggested by the evaluations and disseminated internationally.