A legacy of transformation

Few companies can look back on 175 years not simply as a measure of longevity, but as a record of continual reinvention. Geistlich is one of them.

175 years
Geistlich
Pioneering Spirit

From Switzerland's first glue factory to a global leader in regenerative medicine, its story is defined by vision, resilience and a remarkable capacity to evolve.

Founded in 1851 by Heinrich Glättli and Heinrich Geistlich on the shores of Lake Zurich, the company began as a practical industrial business rooted in the nineteenth century. Yet from the start, Geistlich showed a distinctive ability to adapt decisively and intelligently.

The making of an industrial pioneer

When the company moved to Schlieren in 1869, it became the village's first industrial enterprise. Alongside glue, it produced fertiliser from deglued bones, reflecting an early instinct for finding new value in existing materials.

Under Eduard Geistlich, who took over after his father's death, the company entered international markets despite tariffs and fierce competition. His influence extended beyond business: he helped develop Schlieren by initiating its first electricity supply, supporting the Limmattal railway, installing the area's first public telephone, opening a kindergarten and backing the secondary school.

Independence, resilience and the long view

Expansion to Wolhusen in 1899 showed the same drive for reinvention. After the Simplon Tunnel opened in 1905, Geistlich used newly available labour to build a water channel and hydroelectric power station that supplied both the company and nearby villages.

1920



1928



1932



1939



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1943



1944





1976



1987

After Eduard's death, his eight children founded "Ed. Geistlich Söhne AG" in 1909, securing the company's independence as a family-owned business. That long-term perspective proved vital during crisis. In the First World War, Geistlich maintained production despite severe constraints, importing raw materials from Spain, Malta and France. It also invested in employee welfare, and even during the Great Depression continued pensions and introduced unemployment insurance.

Reinvention through science

By the 1930s, Geistlich was widening its ambitions. In 1933, it launched Tycol, its first synthetic adhesive, patented in 18 countries. The decisive shift came during the Second World War, when the company established a pharmaceutical division.

In 1945, Geistlich introduced Decalcit®, its first pharmaceutical product for human use. Research expanded steadily, and by its centenary in 1951—with the acquisition of Delta-Werke and the launch of GT 50—the company had already moved beyond traditional industrial manufacturing. At the same time, it continued to strengthen its adhesives business, bringing products such as Konstruvit into Swiss homes.

A new frontier: regenerative medicine

Its most consequential transformation came in regenerative medicine. In 1981, Geistlich began working with Dr Philip J. Boyne on jawbone reconstruction. In 1986, the first clinical results for Geistlich Bio-Oss® were published, and in 1987 the product was approved in the United States, marking a major international breakthrough.

2002



2004



2011



2020



2026



In 1997, Geistlich introduced Bio-Gide®, the first collagen membrane for dental regeneration. The company had evolved from industrial manufacturer to pioneer in a specialised field focused on healing and quality of life.

Knowledge as legacy

In the twenty-first century, Geistlich has continued to invest in science and education. The Osteology Foundation, established in 2003, underlined its commitment to advancing regenerative dentistry. Modernisation of the Wolhusen site, international subsidiaries, and expansion into soft-tissue regeneration and wound care followed. The company also showed resilience during the pandemic.

Recent acquisitions and partnerships in Italy, the United States, Brazil, France and Germany show that Geistlich remains outward-looking and future-focused.

Elegance in evolution

To reflect on 175 years of Geistlich is to see more than a list of milestones. Across changing markets, technologies and eras, the company has preserved a clear belief in thoughtful progress rooted in expertise, responsibility and independence.

Looking ahead, from 2025 onwards Geistlich plans to align its portfolio even more closely with customer and market needs. By 2035, it aims to improve the quality of life of more than 80 million people through dental regeneration.

Geistlich has never defined itself by what it once was. Its true legacy lies in what it has repeatedly chosen to become.

Geistlich Pharma AG
www.geistlich.com

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