



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™



COVID-19



WEAR A MASK



STAY 6 FEET APART



AVOID CROWDS



GET A VACCINE

Possible Side Effects After Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

Updated Mar. 16, 2021

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Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine: CDC and FDA have recommended a pause in the use of Johnson & Johnson's J&J/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine in the United States out of an abundance of caution, effective Tuesday, April 13. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will hold its second emergency meeting to discuss J&J/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine on April 23, 2021. People who have received the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine within the past three weeks who develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath should seek medical care right away.

COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you from getting COVID-19. You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. These side effects may affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days. Some people have no side effects.

Common side effects

On the arm where you got the shot:



- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling

Throughout the rest of your body:



- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Fever
- Nausea

Helpful tips

Talk to your doctor about taking over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, aspirin, or antihistamines, for any pain and discomfort you may experience after getting vaccinated. You can take these medications to relieve post-vaccination side effects if you have no other medical reasons that prevent you from taking these medications normally.

It is **not recommended** you take these medicines before vaccination for the purpose of trying to prevent side effects.

To reduce pain and discomfort where you got the shot



- Apply a clean, cool, wet washcloth over the area.
- Use or exercise your arm.

To reduce discomfort from fever



- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Dress lightly.

If you received a second shot

Side effects after your second shot may be more intense than the ones you experienced after your first shot. These side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection and should go away within a few days.

When to call the doctor

In most cases, discomfort from pain or fever is a normal sign that your body is building protection. Contact your doctor or healthcare provider:

- If the redness or tenderness where you got the shot gets worse after 24 hours
- If your side effects are worrying you or do not seem to be going away after a few days



If you get a COVID-19 vaccine and you think you might be having a severe allergic reaction after leaving the vaccination site, seek immediate medical care by calling 911. Learn more about [COVID-19 vaccines and rare severe allergic reactions](#).

Remember

- **Side effects can affect your ability to do daily activities**, but they should go away in a few days.
- **The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine both need 2 shots** in order to get the most protection. You should get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first shot, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you [not to get it](#).
- **You only need 1 shot of the Johnson & Johnson's Janssen (J&J/Janssen) COVID-19 Vaccine** to get the most protection. Learn more about [the different COVID-19 vaccines](#).
- **It takes time for your body to build protection after any vaccination.** People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, or two weeks after the single-dose J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. You should keep using all the tools available [to protect yourself and others](#) until you are fully vaccinated.
- **After you are fully vaccinated for COVID-19, you may be able to start doing some things that you had stopped doing because of the pandemic.** Learn more about what you can do [when you have been fully vaccinated](#).
- **We are still learning how vaccines will affect the spread of COVID-19. After you've been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, you should keep taking precautions** in public places like wearing a mask, staying 6 feet apart from others, avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces, and washing your hands often. CDC will continue to update recommendations as we know more.

Video: After Your COVID-19 Vaccination



What to Expect After Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

Printable Handout for Vaccine Recipient



What to Expect after Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

PDF Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers to Give after Vaccination

English  [199 KB, 1 page]

Español  [158 KB, 1 página]

Available in multiple other languages

More Information

[Ensuring COVID-19 vaccine safety in the United States](#)

[Benefits of getting a COVID-19 vaccine](#)

[How to protect yourself and others](#)

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Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\)](#), Division of Viral Diseases