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

COVID-19

Possible Side Effects After Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

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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:	Throughout the rest of your body:

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 to Relieve Side Effects

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.

If you are fully vaccinated, you can resume activities that you did prior to the pandemic. Learn more about what you can do when you have been fully vaccinated.

Fact Sheet
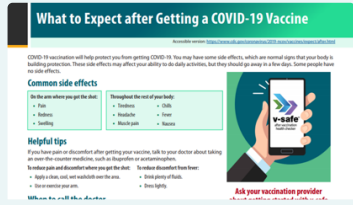
What to Expect after Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

Fact sheet for healthcare workers to give after vaccination.

File Details: 199 KB, 1 page

View PDF in English 🅿️   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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