



COVID-19

What to Do if You Had an Allergic Reaction After Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

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If you get a COVID-19 vaccine and you think you might be having a severe allergic reaction after leaving the vaccination provider site, seek immediate medical care by calling 911.

If You Had a Severe Allergic Reaction to a COVID-19 Vaccine

If you had a severe allergic reaction—also known as anaphylaxis—after getting the first shot of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), **CDC recommends that you not get a second shot of that vaccine.** Learn which [COVID-19 vaccines need a second shot](#).

A severe allergic reaction can cause a rapid heartbeat, difficulty breathing, swelling of the throat, or a generalized rash or hives. A person with a severe allergic reaction needs to be treated with epinephrine or EpiPen[®] or they must go to the hospital. Learn about [common side effects of COVID-19 vaccines](#) and when to call a doctor.

If You Had a Non-severe Allergic Reaction to a COVID-19 Vaccine

If you had an immediate allergic reaction after getting a shot of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) COVID-19 vaccine, **you should not get a second shot of that vaccine**, even if your allergic reaction was not severe enough to require emergency care.

An immediate allergic reaction happens within 4 hours of getting vaccinated and may include symptoms such as hives, swelling, and wheezing (respiratory distress). Your doctor may refer you to a specialist in allergies and immunology to provide more care or advice.

Learn about [getting a different type of vaccine after an allergic reaction](#).

If You Got a Rash Where You Got a COVID-19 Shot

If you had a red, itchy, swollen, or painful rash where you got a COVID-19 shot, **you should still get the second shot** at the recommended interval if a second shot is recommended. These rashes can start a few days to more than a week after the first shot and are sometimes quite large. These rashes are also known as “COVID arm.” Tell your vaccination provider that you experienced a rash or “COVID arm” after the first shot. Your vaccination provider may recommend that you get the second shot in the opposite arm.

If the rash is itchy, you can take an antihistamine. If it is painful, you can take a pain medication like acetaminophen or a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID).

Safeguards Are in Place

CDC has [provided recommendations for COVID-19 vaccination providers](#) about how to prepare for the possibility of a severe allergic reaction:

- All people who get a COVID-19 vaccine should be monitored on site. People who have had severe allergic reactions or who have had any type of immediate allergic reaction to a vaccine or injectable therapy should be monitored for at least 30 minutes after getting the vaccine. All other people should be monitored for at least 15 minutes after getting the vaccine.
- Vaccination providers should have appropriate personnel, medications, and equipment—such as epinephrine, antihistamines, blood pressure monitor, and timing devices to check your pulse—at all COVID-19 vaccination provider sites.
- If you experience a severe allergic reaction after getting a COVID-19 vaccine, vaccination providers can provide care rapidly and call for emergency medical services. You should continue to be monitored in a medical facility for at least several hours.

[Learn more about what to expect after getting vaccinated for COVID-19](#), including normal side effects and tips to reduce pain or discomfort.

CDC Is Monitoring Reports of Severe Allergic Reactions

If someone has a severe allergic reaction after getting vaccinated, their vaccination provider will send a report to the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#). [VAERS](#) is a national system that collects reports from healthcare professionals, vaccine manufacturers, and the public about adverse events that happen after vaccination. Reports of adverse events that are unexpected, appear to happen more often than expected, or have unusual patterns are followed up with specific studies.

[Learn more about how federal partners are monitoring the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in the United States.](#)

Related Pages

- › [Information about COVID-19 Vaccines for People with Allergies](#)
- › [Possible Side Effects](#)
- › [Ensuring the Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines](#)



For Healthcare Professionals

- [Interim Considerations: Preparing for the Potential Management of Anaphylaxis at COVID-19 Vaccination Sites](#)
- [Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the United States](#)
- [COVID-19 Clinical Resources](#)

More Information

Research

[Allergic Reactions Including Anaphylaxis After Receipt of the First Dose of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine — United States, December 14–23, 2020](#)

[Allergic Reactions Including Anaphylaxis After Receipt of the First Dose of Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine — United States, December 21, 2020–January 10, 2021](#)

More Information

[Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#) 

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