CDC Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

COVID-19

🔍   MENU ›

CASES ARE RISING.
ACT NOW!

WEAR A MASK   STAY 6 FEET APART   AVOID CROWDS

What to Expect after Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

Updated Dec. 19, 2020   Print

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.

Common side effects

On the arm where you got the shot:

- Pain
- Swelling

Throughout the rest of your body:

- Fever
- Chills
- Tiredness
- Headache

Helpful tips

If you have pain or discomfort, talk to your doctor about taking an over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen.

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.

When to call the doctor

In most cases, discomfort from fever or pain is normal. Contact your doctor or healthcare provider:

- If the redness or tenderness where you got the shot increases 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 may feel like flu and even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.

- With most COVID-19 vaccines, you will need 2 shots in order for them to work. 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 a second shot.

- It takes time for your body to build protection after any vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines that require 2 shots may not protect you until a week or two after your second shot.

It's important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic as we learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions. Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others, stay at least 6 feet away from others, avoid crowds, and wash your hands often.

Printable Handout for Vaccine Recipient

What to Expect after Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine 📄
PDF Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers to Give after Vaccination

Español 📄 [1 página]

More Information

Ensuring the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in the United States

Benefits of getting a COVID-19 vaccine

How to protect yourself and others

Last Updated Dec. 19, 2020