

What to Expect After

GETTING A COVID-19 VACCINE



When you get a COVID-19 vaccine, you may feel some side effects. They're signs that your body is building protection. Here's what to expect.



COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

On the arm where you got the shot:

- pain or soreness
- swelling

Throughout the rest of your body:

- fever
- tiredness
- chills
- headaches

Side effects may feel like flu and even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.



TIPS

To reduce 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
- ask a health care professional about taking medicine, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen



WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

In most cases, discomfort from fever or pain is normal. Contact your health care 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



REMEMBER

- **Get both doses of your primary shots.** With most COVID-19 vaccines (such as Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), you need two doses for maximum effectiveness. Get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first one, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to get a second shot.
- **It takes time for your body to build protection.** COVID-19 vaccines may not protect you until a week or two after your second primary shot.
- **Get your booster shots.** Ask your health care provider when you should receive a second or third booster shot. Currently, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) advises getting a second booster 5 months after completing your primary round of vaccines.
- **Keep using other forms of protection.** Increase your protection from COVID-19 by continuing to wear a mask in public, staying at least 6 feet away from others, avoiding crowds, and washing your hands often.



**Quality
Insights**

QIN-QIO

Quality Innovation Network -

Quality Improvement Organizations

CENTERS FOR MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION GROUP

This material was prepared by Quality Insights, a Quality Innovation Network - Quality Improvement Organization under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Views expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of CMS or HHS, and any reference to a specific product or entity herein does not constitute endorsement of that product or entity by CMS or HHS. Publication number 12SOW-QI-GEN-040522-CC-1