

After the Shots...

Some vaccines, just like other medications, can cause discomfort for a while after the shot. Here are some common scenarios that might happen, but if this sheet does not answer your questions, call your healthcare provider.

Before any vaccine can be used in the United States, it must be thoroughly tested and approved by the FDA. The FDA uses scientific evidence on each vaccine to assess safety and effectiveness.

Vaccinations may hurt a little, but the diseases they prevent can hurt a lot!

Immunization Reactions That Can Generally Occur in Some People:

- Temporary pain, swelling and redness can normally occur at the injection site and are usually the only side effects. If these symptoms start within the first 48 hours, this is a normal reaction to the shot. These local symptoms may last 3 to 7 days and can be cared for at home.
- Localized soreness in the arm that had the vaccines.
- Hives and itching around the injection site is normal and does not mean that you are allergic to the vaccine.
- A mild fever might begin within 12 hours and lasts 1 to 2 days. This is normal and can be treated.
- Feeling a bit tired or fatigued is possible as your body works to build immunity against diseases.
- A small lump at the injection site. This may last a few weeks and does not require treatment.
- Headache.
- Muscle and joint pain.

How to Treat Normal Immunization Reactions

- Local Reactions at Injection Site
 - Cold Pack: For initial pain or swelling at the injection site, apply a cold pack to the area for 20 minutes each as needed.
 - Pain medication: take acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) or ibuprofen (e.g., Advil) as directed on the label.
 - Localized Hives: Apply 1% hydrocortisone cream (OTC) once or twice.
 - Try to do light activity with your arm to help reduce soreness.
- Fever
 - For fevers up to 102°F (39°C), take acetaminophen or ibuprofen as direct on the label. Make sure to take pain medication with food.
 - For all fevers, drink extra fluids. Avoid excessive clothing or blankets.
- General Reactions
 - Rest and drink lots of fluids.
- Talk to your provider if:
 - Redness around shot becomes larger than 2 inches (5 cm).
 - Pain, swelling, or redness gets worse after 2 days or lasts over 7 days.
 - Fever starts after 2 days, last over 3 days, or goes over 102°F.
 - Other reactions occur that seem severe or persists.

Rare Reactions

On very rare occasions (1 to 2 people out of 1 million), a severe allergic reaction such as anaphylaxis may occur, requiring immediate medical treatment. Your immunization provider is trained to recognize and manage any immediate severe reactions. If a severe reaction is going to occur, it will generally be within the first 15 minutes of receiving a vaccine.

It is important for you to wait for 15 minutes after receiving a vaccine so you may be observed for any reactions, and for treatment to be provided if needed.

- Serious Side Effects
 - Difficulty breathing.
 - Swelling of your face or throat.
 - A fast heartbeat.
 - A rash all over your body.
 - Dizziness and weakness.

If you experience a severe allergic reaction, call 9-1-1, or go to the nearest hospital.

- How to Report a Reaction
 - Reporting a reaction following immunization is an essential part of ensuring ongoing vaccine safety and monitoring.
 - All serious or unexpected reactions should be [reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#) by either you or your provider. www.vaers.hh.gov
 - In the very rare event that a vaccine causes a serious problem, the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP) may offer financial help to individuals who file a petition. [Learn more about VICP](#). The Countermeasure Injury Compensation Program (CICP) may help pay for the costs of medical care and other expenses for people seriously injured by a vaccine.

