

Patient Education

COVID-19 Vaccine Reactions:

The Difference Between Common and Allergic Reactions

INFORMATION YOU NEED NOW

Some people have reactions to certain vaccines. Reactions are also called side effects. There are two types of reactions:

- **Common reactions** are likely to happen. You can treat them at home.
- **Allergic reactions** can be life-threatening. If you have any of the signs of an allergic reaction within 4 hours after your first dose, you need to get emergency care right away, then tell your primary health care provider. See also “Allergic Reactions to the COVID-19 Vaccine.”

COMMON REACTIONS TO THE COVID-19 VACCINE

Typically, reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine are mild or moderate. Most reactions happen within the first few days. They usually don't last longer than three days. Some common reactions are shared here:

- Pain, redness or swelling where the shot was given
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle pain or joint pain
- Chills

Even if you have these reactions, no matter how strong they are, you should get the second dose of your vaccine as needed.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT COMMON COVID-19 VACCINE REACTIONS

Many people do not have reactions after a vaccine, but it is normal if you do. Give your body time to recover. If needed, ice the injection area, rest and take a pain medication like acetaminophen (example: Tylenol™) or ibuprofen (example: Advil™).

Call your health care provider if:

- You have common reactions that last longer than 3 days.
- Your reaction is so strong that you are worried about it.

Some of the COVID-19 vaccine reactions are the same as the symptoms for a COVID-19 infection. Typically, if you had these symptoms you would be tested for COVID-19. **But when you know that your symptoms likely are due to the vaccine, you do not need to be tested.**

You **do** need to be tested for COVID-19:

- If you were in close contact in the last 2 weeks with someone who has COVID-19.
- If you have a cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, new loss of taste or smell, congestion, or runny nose. These are not reactions to the vaccine.

ALLERGIC REACTIONS: CALL YOUR CARE TEAM



If you have any of the signs of an allergic reaction within four hours after your first dose, **it is very important that you get emergency care then tell your primary care team right away.**



Do not wait until your second dose to report possible allergic reactions that you had after your first dose. If you have an allergic reaction, you may need to be assessed by your health care provider as soon as possible.

If you have a history of allergies, tell your care team about your allergies. Tell them about all reactions you have had to medications and vaccines.

See also “Allergic Reactions to the COVID-19 Vaccine.”



ALLERGIC REACTIONS TO THE COVID-19 VACCINE

Signs of an **allergic reaction** include the following when they happen within four hours after your first vaccine dose:

- Continuous shortness of breath or wheezing.
- Swelling of the lips, eyes or tongue.
- Redness, swelling or itchiness in areas of the body other than the limb in which the vaccine was given.



GET EMERGENCY CARE

If you have any signs of an allergic reaction, get help right away. Call 911 or your local emergency number. Or have someone drive you to the nearest emergency care center. You may be having an allergic reaction. This could be life-threatening.

TELL YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM

After you get emergency care, call your primary care team right away to tell them about your reaction. This reaction may mean you are allergic to the vaccine.

Call your care team even if the reactions went away on their own. Call even if you did not get emergency care.

Your health care providers care about you. They want to be sure you are OK.



DOES YOUR VACCINE HAVE A SECOND DOSE?

If you had an **allergic reaction** within four hours after your first dose:

- You may not be able to have the second dose of the same vaccine.
- You may be able to get a different vaccine for your second dose.

Your health care provider needs to know about any allergic reactions you have as soon as possible.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions after you read this, contact your primary health care team.