

# Just had the COVID-19 vaccine? Well done and thank you!

Mild side effects are common in the first 3 days. Here's what to look out for.



**Arm is sore or red  
at the injection site**



**Fever/  
chills**



**Headache**



**Fatigue**



**Muscle aches**



**Nausea**

- Side effects can start around 6 hours after the vaccine and usually resolve in 2-3 days. If needed, treat pain and fever with paracetamol.
- Side effects may be more noticeable if you are young, had COVID-19 before or after the second dose of a 2-dose vaccine course.

These side effects show your body is building an immune response. The technical term for this is 'reactogenicity'. If you do not get side effects it does not mean that your body is not building an immune response.

- If your side effects are severe or last longer than 3 days, contact your healthcare provider or the Western Cape call centre.
- If any of the following symptoms develop within a month of vaccination, go to your nearest emergency centre:
  - New-onset severe headache especially if with blurred vision, vomiting, weakness on one side of the body or difficulty speaking.
  - Severe abdominal pain that does not go away.
  - A rash of tiny red spots around the site of injection.
  - A painful or cold leg.
  - Chest pain or shortness of breath.

**Extremely rare side-effects affect  
1-7 people per million vaccinated**

They include a severe allergic reaction called anaphylaxis (within minutes to hours) and a rare form of blood clots (between 4 days and 3 weeks).



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## Keep your vaccine card safe.

- This is your proof of vaccination.
- Keep your follow-up appointment if you have one.

Some vaccines are given in two doses (for example Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty™) COVID vaccine). The second dose is important to boost your body's immune response to the vaccine and help its protective effect last longer.

## You might still get COVID-19. Here's why.

- You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine as there is no live coronavirus in it.
- It is still possible to get COVID-19 as no vaccine is 100% effective.
- You might have caught COVID-19 before being vaccinated (it can take up to 2 weeks before COVID-19 symptoms start).
- You might catch it within the first 2 weeks after being vaccinated while your immune system is being trained up to fight COVID-19.



## After vaccination, don't confuse vaccine side effects with COVID-19 symptoms!

- If your fever lasts more than 2 days or you develop a continuous cough, sore throat, or changes in your ability to taste or smell after your vaccination, you may have COVID-19.
- Isolate yourself and arrange to get a COVID test. Contact your healthcare provider or the Western Cape call centre.

Even if you do get COVID-19, you are very unlikely to get severely ill or die from COVID-19.

**Western Cape call centre: 0860 142 142**



## We still don't know if the vaccine will stop the spread. Don't forget COVID-19 prevention!

- Ensure your COVID-19 vaccines are up to date.
- Know what to do if you get flu-or cold-like symptoms.
- Ventilate indoor spaces.
- As a healthcare worker, continue to wear standard PPE at work.

**We are not safe until we are all safe.**