

COVID-19 Vaccine: Care Instructions



Overview

The COVID-19 vaccine can help you avoid getting COVID-19, a disease caused by a new type of coronavirus. COVID-19 can cause pneumonia and even death.

You may need two doses of the vaccine. And you might need "booster" doses later on to help you stay protected. The vaccine prevents most cases of COVID-19. But if you do still catch COVID-19, your symptoms will probably be less severe than if you hadn't gotten the vaccine. You can't get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

The risk of serious problems from the vaccine is very low. And you might not have any side effects from the vaccine at all. If you do, they will probably be a lot like the common side effects of other vaccines. They include things like a slight fever, muscle aches, and soreness. These side effects don't last too long, and they can be treated if they bother you.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- If you have a sore arm or a slight fever after the vaccine, take an over-the-counter pain medicine, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Read and follow all instructions on the label. Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 20. It has been linked to Reye syndrome, a serious illness.
- Put ice or a cold pack on the sore area for 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Put a thin cloth between the ice and your skin.
- Continue to practice social distancing, wear a mask, and follow all the steps for good hand-washing.

When should you call for help?

Call anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if after getting the COVID-19 vaccine:

- You have symptoms of a severe reaction to the vaccine. Symptoms of a severe reaction may include:
 - Severe difficulty breathing.
 - Sudden raised, red areas (hives) all over your body.
 - Severe lightheadedness.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.