Care after immunization: Adults

Learn what to expect over the next few days and how to manage side effects

Side effects you might have after some vaccines

- **Muscle and joint soreness**
- **Tiredness and headache**
- **Fever, chills, and shivering**
- **Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea**
- **Pain, redness, and swelling where the vaccine was given**
  
  *For COVID-19 vaccines: can occur up to 7 days after*

- **After MMR and varicella vaccines: fever, rash, and other side effects may occur about 1-2 weeks after immunization**

**Most side effects are mild and go away after 1-2 days**

For vaccine-specific side effects, read the HealthLinkBC Files at

[immunizebc.ca/adults/vaccines-recommended](http://immunizebc.ca/adults/vaccines-recommended)

Click on the vaccine name to view the HealthLinkBC File.
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What can I do to feel better?

For pain and swelling where the vaccine was given:
- Apply a cool, wet cloth or wrapped ice pack over the area.
- Move your arm several times a day.
- Take over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen (Advil®) or acetaminophen (Tylenol®).

For fever:
- Rest.
- Drink lots of fluids.
- Dress lightly.
- Take over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen (Advil®) or acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to help bring down the fever and reduce discomfort.

Safety tips when using over-the-counter medicine
- Carefully read and follow all directions on the label. Do not take more than the recommended amount.
- If you are pregnant, do not take ibuprofen (Advil®). Use acetaminophen (Tylenol®) instead.

When to seek medical attention

Serious side effects after immunization are very rare. But if they do happen, it’s important to act.

Seek medical attention right away if you have:
- Signs or symptoms of a severe allergic reaction (for example, hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue, or lips). If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or your local emergency number.
- Received a COVID-19 vaccine and have chest pain, shortness of breath, or feeling of a fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart.
- Any other worrisome signs or symptoms.

Report any serious and/or unexpected side effects after immunization to your immunization provider/clinic or health care provider.

Find your immunization record at healthgateway.gov.bc.ca