

COVID Vaccine Q&A:

What to Expect After the Second Dose



1. What symptoms should I expect after a second COVID-19 vaccination?

Most patients do not experience anything other than a mildly sore arm after the first dose. The second dose appears to really stimulate your immune system, which is a good thing, that's the whole point of the vaccine. It is common to feel like you are coming down with a cold/flu the day after your second shot. You may have a headache, fever, body aches and fatigue... it tends to only last about a day. It is very important to understand that this is expected. What you are feeling is your immune system building a strong defense against COVID.

2. Is there anything I can do about these symptoms?

BEFORE THE SECOND SHOT, we do not recommend taking prescription or over-the-counter pain medications, as this could blunt the immune response.

AFTER THE SECOND SHOT, tough it out if you can. If needed, consider taking over-the-counter pain medications, such as Tylenol, acetaminophen, Motrin, ibuprofen.

3. If I don't have side effects, is the vaccine working?

Yes, the vaccine is highly effective and your body is building a response to the vaccine even if you don't have any side effects.

4. When should I call my doctor?

Seek medical attention if you experience any respiratory problems such as trouble breathing or if the symptoms persist after two days.

5. How long will it take after my second shot to get maximum protection?

The Pfizer vaccine reaches its full effect one to two weeks after the second dose.

6. Should I get tested for COVID-19 after my second shot?

Antibody testing to see if the vaccine worked is not recommended.

7. Will the Pfizer vaccine protect me against the new virus variants?

Research is ongoing, but a preliminary study shows that the Pfizer vaccine is effective against at least two of the new variants studied.

8. How long will the vaccine against COVID last?

More time is needed to study how long immunity lasts. Studies show that people who were vaccinated had a very strong immunity to COVID-19, but scientists don't yet know how long that immunity will last.

9. Why do I need to continue wearing a mask and practicing social distancing?

We do not know if people can still spread the virus after getting vaccinated or the impact of the variant strains. **Please continue to wear masks and practice social distancing.**

10. Should I keep my vaccine documentation?

Absolutely. Keep your proof of vaccination in a safe place. It may be required for future travel or return to work or school.