

# **COVID-19 vaccine: What to do about side effects**

In this feature, we look at over-the-counter options and home remedies for COVID-19 vaccine side effects.



All vaccines, including those for COVID-19, carry the possibility of side effects.

Across the globe, there are currently 15 COVID-19 vaccines that are authorized

for use in at least one country each.

The most common side effects following COVID-19 vaccines are fatigue, a fever, headaches, body aches, chills, nausea, diarrhea, and pain at the site of injection,

according to the World  
Health Organization

Everyone is affected  
differently by vaccination.

Some people may  
experience few or no side  
effects while others may  
experience multiple side  
effects and feel pretty ill. In

this feature, we explain what to do about side effects of a COVID-19 vaccine. Stay informed with live updates on the current COVID-19 outbreak and visit our coronavirus hub for more advice on prevention and treatment.

# **Over-the-counter treatments**

Anyone concerned about the side effects of vaccination might wonder if they should take an over-the-counter medication before getting the vaccine, to ward off any side effects before they occur.

However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) do not recommend it. While taking steps to prevent symptoms of other health issues is a good idea, that is not the case here. It is best to wait and see whether any side effects arise, then treat

these individually, as opposed to guessing and taking several over-the-counter products ahead of time.

A person should visit their local pharmacist before taking any over-the-counter medications to ease side



effects of the vaccine.

Because a pharmacist is aware of a person's medications and medical history, they have a good understanding of any interactions that may occur.

But what if a person is unable to contact their

pharmacist and needs immediate relief from muscle aches, injection site pain, a fever, or a combination of these issues? In this case, the following may help:

- ibuprofen (Advil)

- acetaminophen or paracetamol (Tylenol)
- aspirin

## **Home remedies**

For anyone who prefers not to take over-the-counter medications or is looking for additional treatments, several self-care techniques

can help ease any COVID-19 vaccination side effects. For reactions at the injection site, such as pain or swelling, use a clean, cool wet washcloth to create a compress. This might also help with muscle and joint aches.

To ease soreness or stiffness in the arm, move it as much as possible. This may seem counterintuitive and cause a little discomfort, but it helps prevent further stiffness by loosening up sore muscles.

Anyone with chills and a low-grade fever should make sure to drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration. Wearing light clothing and dressing in layers will help prevent overheating.