What to Expect after Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you from getting sick from COVID-19.

Common side effects
You may have some side effects, which are normal signs that your body is building protection. Side effects include:

On the arm where you got the shot:
- Pain
- Swelling

Throughout the rest of your body:
- Fever
- Tiredness
- Chills
- Headache

Helpful tips
If you have pain or discomfort, talk to your doctor about taking an over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen.

To reduce pain and discomfort where you got the shot:
- Apply a clean, cool, wet washcloth over the area.
- Use or exercise your arm.

To reduce discomfort from fever:
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Dress lightly.

When to call the doctor
In most cases, discomfort from fever or pain is normal. Contact your doctor or healthcare provider:
- If the redness or tenderness where you got the shot increases after 24 hours
- If your side effects are worrying you or do not seem to be going away after a few days

Remember
- Side effects may feel like flu and even affect your ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.
- The COVID-19 vaccine requires two doses to work. Get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first one, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to get a second shot.
- It takes time for your body to build protection after any vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines may not protect you until a few weeks after your second shot.

It’s important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic as we learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions.

sf.gov/COVIDvaccine

City & County of San Francisco