

What to expect after your vaccination

Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine



Vaccines help your immune system fight infections faster and more effectively. Vaccines work by making the body produce antibodies to fight disease without infecting us with that disease. When you get a vaccine, it stimulates your immune response, helping your body fight off and remember the infection so it can attack it if ever invades again.

The bacteria and viruses used in vaccines are weakened or killed, so they won't make you ill.

If the vaccinated person then encounters the disease itself, their immune system will recognise it and immediately produce the antibodies they need to fight it.

Vaccines have to be thoroughly tested for safety before they're made routinely available.

Side effects

Most people don't have any serious side effects from vaccines. The most common side effects are usually mild and go away quickly on their own.

The most common side effects after vaccination can include:

- Pain, swelling, or redness at the site the injection was given
- Mild fever
- Chills
- Feeling tired
- Headache
- Muscle and joint aches

These most common side effects are a sign that your body is starting to build immunity (protection) against a disease.

If you have any of these mild side effects, you can take steps to help you feel better. For example:

- Drink lots of fluids.
- Put a cool, wet cloth on the place where you are sore.
- You can take a pain-relieving tablet such as paracetamol or ibuprofen according to the instructions on the packet (if these are suitable for you)

- If your arm is sore after getting your vaccination, try moving your arm around — it can help with pain and swelling.

Not all illnesses that occur after vaccination will be a side effect. Because millions of people every year are vaccinated, it's inevitable that some will go on to develop a coincidental infection or illness shortly afterwards.

It's very unlikely that you will have serious side effects from a vaccine. **If you have any symptoms that concern you after you get vaccinated, call the clinic or your general practitioner (GP).**

You can contact WTC at:

Phone: 0151 705 3223

Email: tropshop@lstmed.ac.uk

What about serious side effects?

Serious side effects from vaccines are extremely rare. For example, if 1 million doses of a vaccine are given, 1 to 2 people may have a severe allergic reaction.

Keep in mind that getting vaccinated is much safer than getting the diseases vaccines prevent.

If you, a doctor, nurse or pharmacist suspects that you or your child has had a possible side effect to a vaccine, it can be reported through the [Yellow Card Scheme](#).

The Yellow Card Scheme is run by the [Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency \(MHRA\)](#) and is designed to pick up unexpected problems or new side effects.

If a serious new side effect is identified, the MHRA will follow up the report. It may change the way a vaccine is used, or it may even be taken off the market.

This leaflet is based on information from:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/safety-and-side-effects/>

https://www.vaccines.gov/basics/safety/side_effects