Australian Government

COVID-19 VACCINATION

COVID-19 vaccine

Side effects you might have after your vaccination

Easy Read fact sheet

The Australian Government wrote this fact sheet. When you see the word 'we', it means the Australian Government.

We wrote this fact sheet in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

You can ask for help to read this fact sheet. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

What is this fact sheet about?

A **vaccine** is a type of medicine that:

- helps people fight a virus if they come in contact with it

- can stop people from getting very sick from the virus.

The COVID-19 vaccine is a safe way to protect:

- you

- your family

- the community.

A **vaccination** is when you receive an injection of the vaccine. This is done with a needle.

After you have your vaccination, you might feel some **side effects**.

A side effect is something that sometimes happens to people after they take medicine.

You only get side effects after you take medicine.

You should follow the instructions on the next page if you have a side effect after you get a COVID-19 vaccine.

Side effects don't happen to everyone.

Most side effects you get after a COVID-19 vaccination won't make you very sick.

We call these common side effects.

We explain common side effects on page 9.

If you are worried about any common side effects, you can:

- call your doctor

- call the place where you had your vaccination.

They can give you advice about what to do.

But some side effects you get after a COVID-19 vaccination are serious.

These side effects are very rare.

We explain serious side effects on the page 6.

If you have any serious side effects, you should:
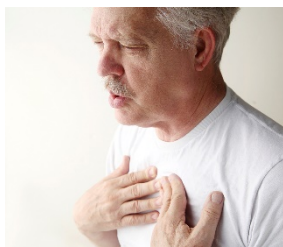
- call Triple Zero straight away

- go to the hospital straight away.

Serious side effects

You might have a serious side effect if you:

- have trouble breathing

- **wheeze** – this means you hear sounds you don't usually hear when you breathe

- feel a very fast heartbeat

- fall down or faint.

You might get a very bad headache that:

- starts at least 4 days after your vaccination

- doesn't get any better if you take pain medicine

- gets worse when you lie down.

You might also:

- feel sick

- vomit.

Your vision might go blurry.

You might find it hard to talk.

You might have **seizures**.

A seizure affects how your brain works. It can cause you to:

- suddenly lose control of your body

- pass out.

You might feel pain in your:

- chest

- leg.

You might feel pain in your stomach that doesn't go away.

If you or another person get any of these serious side effects after you get after a COVID-19 vaccination, you should call Triple Zero straight away.
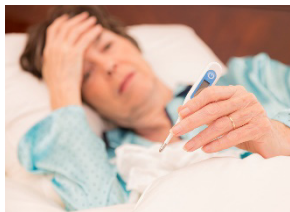
Common side effects

Most side effects:

- are not serious

- go away on their own in a couple of days.

Some common side effects include:

- pain or swelling in your arm where the needle went in

- a fever

- sore muscles or joints

- tiredness

- headaches

- chills.

Other less common side effects include:

- feeling like you might vomit

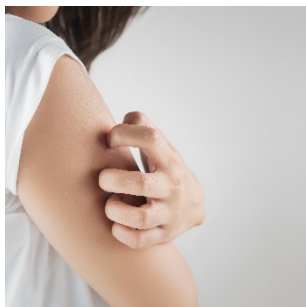
- feeling sick in your stomach

- lumps in your neck

- pain in your leg

- not sleeping well.

Where the needle went in your arm it might also be:

- red

- itchy.

What should you do if you feel side effects?

You should call Triple Zero straight away if you get any of the serious side effects on page 6.

If you have any common side effects that are bothering you, you can take pain medication.
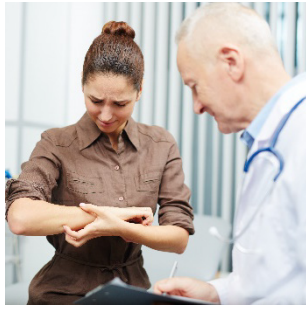
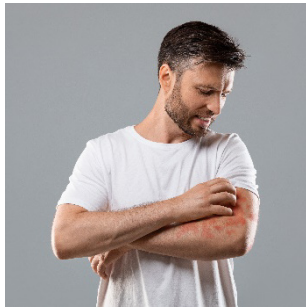A simple painkiller like paracetamol or ibuprofen might be right for you.

Check with your doctor or support person before you take any other types of pain medication.

You can also use a cold pack on your arm where the needle went in.

You should talk to your doctor if you think you are having an **allergic reaction**.

An allergic reaction is when your body reacts to something, such as food or medicine.

For example, you might get an itchy rash or your tongue might get bigger.

You should also talk to your doctor if you:

- are worried about a side effect

- have a side effect that lasts more than a couple of days

- have a side effect that isn't in this fact sheet.

If you get any side effects, you can also tell the **Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)**.

The TGA:

- approves vaccines

- keeps track of how well they work.

You can tell the TGA about any side effects on their website at **www.tga.gov.au/reporting-suspected-side-effects-associated-covid-19-vaccine**

Do you need to get a COVID-19 test after the vaccination?

Some of the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccination are the same as the symptoms of COVID-19.

Some people might still get COVID-19 after their vaccination.

If you get COVID-19 after getting the COVID-19 vaccination, you won't get as sick from the virus.

You might need a COVID-19 test if you have any COVID-19 symptoms, including:
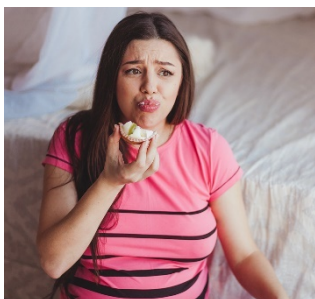
- fever

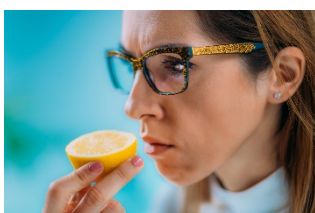- sore throat

- cough

- tiredness

- shortness of breath

- losing your sense of taste

- losing your sense of smell.

You also might need a COVID-19 test if:

- someone you have seen lately has COVID-19

- you live in a state or territory with a lot of COVID-19 cases.

If you're not sure, you should talk to your doctor.

More information

You can call the Disability Gateway on **1800 643 787**.

They are open from 8 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday.

You can visit the Department of Health website at **www.health.gov.au** for more information about the vaccine.

You can call the National Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccine Helpline on **1800 020 080**.

If you need information in a language other than English, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450**.

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can call the National Relay Service on **133 677**.

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