



# What To Expect After Your Child's COVID-19 Vaccine (6 months - 4 years)

Getting children vaccinated against COVID-19 can help keep them:

- From getting COVID-19.
- From getting very sick if they do get COVID-19.
- Safe when they attend school or daycare.
- Safe while participating in sports, playdates, and other group activities.

## General Information

After the COVID-19 vaccine, your child's body will start to make antibodies and prepare their body in other ways to protect them against the COVID-19 virus. This is called an immune response. The vaccine does NOT contain the virus that causes COVID-19 infection.

Like with other childhood vaccines, most children will feel fine after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Some may feel a little "under the weather." This is usually a sign that the vaccine is starting to work.

These are the most common general vaccine side effects in children:



## What to do after the shot

Make sure to give your child lots of love and attention following their COVID-19 vaccine. Most side effects from vaccines are usually mild and brief. If your child does have side effects, there are things you can do to help them feel better.

If the injection site is sore after getting the shot:

- Put a cold pack wrapped in a towel or a damp washcloth on the sore area for up to 20 minutes, or as needed.
- Encourage them to move their arm or leg to help with pain and swelling. For babies, you may gently move their leg for them.

- Give them a non-aspirin pain reliever, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen. Check with your pediatrician or pharmacist if you need help with dosing.

If your child has a fever:

- Give them lots of fluids, especially water.
- Give them a non-aspirin pain reliever, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen. Check with your pediatrician or pharmacist if you need help with dosing.

## Special Information for Infants and Toddlers

Infants and toddlers might not be able to tell you how they feel so it's important to pay extra attention to them for a few days after their vaccine. They might seem fussy, cry more, or not eat as much. Some children may eat less in the 24 hours after their shot.

These additional steps may be helpful after their vaccine:

- Breastfeed the baby after their shot if they are still breastfeeding.
- Gently move the infant's leg where they received the injection from time to time.
- For babies, place a cold, damp washcloth at the injection site, to reduce pain and swelling.
- For a fever, a cool sponge bath may soothe them.

Severe reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine are rare. However, it is important to know when to seek medical care.

## Contact your pediatrician

- If the side effects are worrying or do not seem to be going away after a few days.
- If your child experiences a high fever (104° F (40° C) or higher) or weakness following the vaccine.
- If you see something that concerns you.

## Records and follow up

- Keep the vaccine card from their first shot and bring it to their next appointment.
- If your child is between the ages of 6 months and 4 years old, the recommendation is to get either 2 shots of Moderna or 3 shots of Pfizer-BioNTech to be fully protected from COVID-19.
- If your child is immunocompromised (has a weakened immune system) additional doses are required.
- Make a note of your child's next vaccine appointment to make sure they are fully vaccinated and fully protected.

### For more information:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/before-during-after-shots.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/visit/less-stressful.html>
- <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/combating-misinformation-about-covid-19-vaccines>

