



# Just had the COVID-19 vaccine?

Well done and thank you for  
protecting yourself!



Western Cape  
Government

May 2021



**Mild side effects are common in the first 3 days. Here's what to look out for.**



**Arm is sore or red at the injection site.**



**Fever/chills**



**Headache**



**Fatigue**



**Muscle aches**



**Nausea**

- Side effects can start around 6 hours after the vaccine and usually resolve in 2-3 days. If needed, treat pain and fever with paracetamol.
- Side effects may be more noticeable if you are young, had COVID-19 before or after the second dose of a 2-dose vaccine course.

**These side effects show your body is building an immune response.**

The technical term for this is 'reactogenicity'. If you do not get side effects it does not mean that your body is not building an immune response.

- If your side effects are severe or last longer than 3 days, contact your healthcare provider or the Western Cape call centre.
- If any of the following symptoms develop within a month of vaccination, go to your nearest emergency centre:
  - New-onset severe headache especially if with blurred vision, vomiting, weakness on one side of the body or difficulty speaking.
  - Severe abdominal pain that does not go away.
  - A rash of tiny red spots around the site of injection.
  - A painful or cold leg.
  - Chest pain or shortness of breath.

**Extremely rare  
side-effects affect  
1-7 people per  
million vaccinated**

**They include a severe  
allergic reaction  
called anaphylaxis  
(within minutes to  
hours) and a rare  
form of blood clots  
(between 4 days and  
3 weeks).**

**Some vaccines are  
given in 2 doses**  
(for example Pfizer-  
BioNTech (Comirnaty™)  
COVID vaccine).



**The second dose is  
important to boost your  
body's immune response  
to the vaccine and help  
its protective effect  
last longer.**

**Keep your vaccine  
card safe.**

**This is your proof  
of vaccination.**



**Keep your follow-up  
appointment if you  
have one.**

# You might still get COVID-19.

## Here's why.



- You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine as there is no live coronavirus in it.
- It is still possible to get COVID-19 as no vaccine is 100% effective.
- You might have caught COVID-19 before being vaccinated (it can take up to 2 weeks before COVID-19 symptoms start).
- You might catch it within the first 2 weeks after being vaccinated while your immune system is being trained up to fight COVID-19.

## **After vaccination, don't confuse vaccine side effects with COVID-19 symptoms.**

- If your fever lasts more than 2 days or you develop a continuous cough, sore throat, or changes in your ability to taste or smell after your vaccination, you may have COVID-19.
- Isolate yourself and arrange to get a COVID test. Contact your healthcare provider or the Western Cape call centre.

**Even if you do get COVID-19, you are very unlikely to get severely ill or die from COVID-19.**

**Western Cape call centre**

**0860 142 142**



## **Don't forget COVID-19 prevention.**

**We still don't know if the  
vaccine will stop the spread.**

- Wear a mask in public.
- Keep apart from others outside your home as much as possible.
- Avoid crowds and confined spaces – have small gatherings outside.
- Wash or sanitise your hands regularly.
- As a healthcare worker, continue to wear standard PPE at work.



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**Western Cape call centre  
0860 142 142**



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