



UK Health  
Security  
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**NHS**



What to expect after your

# COVID-19 vaccination

Advice for children  
and young people



Find out more at [nhs/CovidVaccine](https://nhs.uk/CovidVaccine)

Withdrawn September 2024



**The NHS is offering  
the COVID-19 vaccine  
to all eligible children.**

This leaflet tells you  
what to expect after you  
have had your vaccination.  
If you need a second  
dose of vaccine, make  
sure you arrange your  
next appointment.

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## Side effects

Like all medicines, vaccines can cause side effects. Most of these are mild and short-term and not everyone gets them. The very common side effects should only last a day or two. The Pfizer vaccine tends to cause more side effects after the second dose than the first dose.

Very common side effects in the first day or two include:

- having a painful, heavy feeling and tenderness in the arm where you had your injection
- feeling tired
- headache, aches and chills

You may also have flu like symptoms with episodes of shivering and shaking for a day or two. However, a high temperature could also indicate that you have COVID-19 or another infection.

You can rest and take paracetamol (follow the dose advice in the packaging) to help make you feel better.

An uncommon side effect is swollen glands in the armpit or neck on the same side as the arm where you had the vaccine. This can last for around 10 days, but if it lasts longer see your doctor.

## What to do if you are concerned about your symptoms

These symptoms normally last less than a week. If your symptoms seem to get worse or if you are concerned, you or your parents can call NHS 111. If you do seek advice from a doctor or nurse, make sure you tell them about your vaccination (show them the vaccination card) so that they can assess you properly.

You can also report suspected side effects of vaccines and medicines through the Yellow Card scheme. You can do this online by searching Coronavirus Yellow Card or by downloading the Yellow Card app.



[coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk](https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk)

## Are there other more serious side effects?

Recently, cases of inflammation of the heart (called myocarditis or pericarditis) have been reported very rarely after COVID-19 vaccines.

These cases have been seen mainly in younger men within a few days after vaccination. Most of these people recovered quickly and felt better following rest and simple treatments. You should seek medical advice urgently if you experience:

- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- feelings of having a fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart

## Can you catch COVID-19 from the vaccine?

You cannot catch COVID-19 from the vaccine but it is possible to have caught COVID-19 and not realise you have the symptoms until after your vaccination appointment. The most important symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

Although a fever can occur within a day or two of vaccination, if you have any other COVID-19 symptoms or your fever lasts longer, stay at home and arrange to have a test.

## What to do next



After your vaccine, you should be given a record card. If you need a second dose your

next appointment will be in about 8 to 12 weeks time. The second dose will give you longer lasting protection.

**Keep your record card safe. If you need a second dose, don't forget to keep your next appointment.**

## If you are not well for your appointment

If you are unwell, it is better to wait until you have recovered to have your vaccine.

You should not attend a vaccine appointment if you are self-isolating or waiting for a COVID-19 test. Ideally you should wait 12 weeks after having a positive COVID-19 test or 4 weeks if you are at higher risk.

## Will the vaccine protect you?

The COVID-19 vaccine that you have had has been shown to reduce the chance of you suffering from COVID-19 disease.

Millions of doses of the vaccine have been given worldwide. The vaccine is highly effective in children and young people.



It may take a few weeks for your body to build up some protection from the vaccine. Like all medicines, no vaccine is completely effective, so you should continue to take recommended precautions to avoid infection.

Some people may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe.

## What you can do after you've had the vaccine

The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19 infection, and it will reduce your chance of becoming ill. It is still important to continue to follow current national guidance. You can continue going to school, college or work after you have had the vaccine.

To protect yourself and your family, friends and colleagues, you must still:

- think about social distancing
- wear a face mask where advised
- wash your hands carefully and frequently
- open windows to let fresh air in
- follow the current guidance at [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)



## How COVID-19 is spread

COVID-19 is spread through droplets breathed out from the nose or mouth, particularly when speaking or coughing. It can also be picked up by touching your eyes, nose and mouth after contact with contaminated objects and surfaces.

## Further information

Please read the product information leaflet for more details on your vaccine, including possible side effects, on the Coronavirus Yellow Card website.

You can also report suspected side effects on the same website or by downloading the Yellow Card app. Further information is available from [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/)



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