

The COVID vaccine side-effect guide: Here's what you ought to know - SCRIPT

Vaccines provide your body with a type of “cheat sheet” for fighting germs.

In the case of COVID, jabs help your body to defend itself against a virus called SARS-CoV-2.

Some COVID shots, such as the Johnson & Johnson jab, introduce a harmless version of SARS-CoV-2 into your body.

Because the harmless virus looks like the real virus, it triggers your body to produce antibodies that can fight off the virus.

Your body will remember how to make these antibodies, so that it can quickly produce them when you encounter the actual virus.

What types of side effects can you expect?

Experiencing a side effect post-vaccination is a signal that your body is building immunity — most people recover within a few days.

But not everyone will have that same reaction, so it doesn't mean that if you don't experience side effects that the jab isn't working.

There are two types of side effects:

- Local effects — they occur at the site of injection
- Systemic effects — they affect your whole body

Local effects include mild symptoms such as pain, swelling and tenderness at the site of injection.

They're common symptoms and were seen in roughly two out of three people who received Pfizer jabs in [a study in the UK](#).

Systemic responses affect the whole body and include symptoms such as nausea, fatigue and diarrhoea.

About one in four people who were vaccinated with the Pfizer jab in a UK study reported these symptoms.

Systemic effects are considered mild to moderate side effects and are relatively common. Most people recover within a few days.

What about rare side effects?

More serious side effects, such as severe allergic reactions, known as anaphylaxis are far less common than milder symptoms.

In the US, about [4.5 cases of anaphylaxis were reported for every one million Moderna and Pfizer doses that were administered \(each jab requires two doses\).](#)

For the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, about three in every million vaccinated people in the United States developed thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) which causes a rare type of blood clots.

[For women between the ages of 18 and 49, the clots were reported in almost 9 of every million.](#)