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Allergic Reactions after COVID-19 Vaccination

Updated July 20, 2022 Languages [Print](#)

If You Are Having a Severe Allergic Reaction to a COVID-19 Vaccine

Severe allergic reactions to vaccines are rare but can happen. If you get a [COVID-19 vaccine](#) and you think you might be having a severe allergic reaction after leaving the vaccination provider site, seek immediate medical care by calling 911.

A severe allergic reaction can cause:

- difficulty breathing or wheezing,
- a drop in blood pressure,
- swelling of the tongue or throat, or
- a generalized rash or hives, which may include mucus membranes.

If You Had a Severe Allergic Reaction to a COVID-19 Vaccine

- The [Pfizer-BioNTech](#) and [Moderna](#) COVID-19 vaccines are messenger RNA vaccines, also called mRNA vaccines.
- [Johnson & Johnson's/Janssen](#)(J&J/Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine is a [viral vector vaccine](#).
- [Novavax](#) COVID-19 vaccine is a [protein subunit](#) vaccine.
- If you had a [severe allergic reaction](#) after receiving a particular type of COVID-19 vaccine (either mRNA, protein subunit, or viral vector), you should not get another dose of that type of vaccine.

CDC recommends that people getting a booster get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna). However, if you had a severe allergic reaction after a dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine or if you have had a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient in an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, you may be able to get the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine.

Learn about [getting a different type of COVID-19 vaccine after an allergic reaction](#).

If You Have Had an Immediate Allergic Reaction to Other Vaccines or Injectables

If you have had an immediate allergic reaction (a reaction that started within 4 hours) to any vaccine other than a COVID-19 vaccine or any injectable therapy, you may still be able to get a COVID-19 vaccine. **However, your doctor may refer you to an allergy and immunology specialist for additional care or advice.**

If You Had a Non-severe Allergic Reaction to a COVID-19 Vaccine

If you had an immediate allergic reaction (a reaction that started within 4 hours of getting vaccinated) to a COVID-19 vaccine, but the reaction was not considered severe by a medical professional, you likely can **receive another dose of the same vaccine under certain conditions**. Your doctor may refer you to an allergy and immunology specialist for additional care or advice.

If You Had a Rash on the Arm where You Got a COVID-19 Shot

If you had a red, itchy, swollen, or painful rash where you got a COVID-19 shot, **you should still get another shot** at the scheduled date and time. This applies to second, additional, or [booster shots](#). Your vaccination provider may recommend that you get your next COVID-19 vaccine in the opposite arm, if possible.

These rashes can start a few days to more than a week after your shot and are sometimes quite large. These rashes are also known as "COVID arm." Tell your vaccination provider that you experienced a rash or "COVID arm" after your shot. Your vaccination provider may recommend that you get your next COVID-19 vaccine in the opposite arm if possible.

If the rash is itchy, you can take an antihistamine. If it is painful, you can take a pain medication like acetaminophen or a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID).