

What to expect when you get your COVID-19 vaccine

Getting vaccinated is an important step toward ending the pandemic.

Here are some things you can expect:



Getting 1 or 2 doses, depending on the vaccine available. If you get the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine, you'll need to come back for a second dose. The doses are given several weeks apart, and the same authorized vaccine brand must be used for both – the vaccines are not interchangeable. If you get the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine, you'll only need one dose.



Receiving a vaccination card. When you get vaccinated, you'll be given a card that describes the brand of vaccine. If 2 doses are required, your card will show the date for receiving the second dose. The card will also serve as proof of vaccination, so keep it in a safe place (consider taking a picture of the card as an extra safety measure).



Waiting for 15 or 30 minutes after each shot. Although rare, allergic reactions can occur. To watch for possible reactions, we're asking patients to stay for 15 minutes, or 30 minutes if you have a history of allergies, at the vaccination site after getting each dose. If you have a history of severe allergic reactions, if you carry an EpiPen, have had a severe reaction to any ingredients in a COVID-19 vaccine, or had a severe allergic reaction after a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, you should not receive the vaccine until you consult with your physician.



Experiencing possible side effects. Some people have reported feeling temporary flu-like symptoms, lasting 1 to 2 days on average, after receiving a dose. The symptoms are a sign that your body is building immunity to the virus. These side effects may include:

- Pain at the injection site
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Joint pain
- Fever

Some side effects may be more severe in a small percentage of people. If you experience severe side effects, please contact your doctor.



Following safety guidelines. According to the CDC, you can resume many activities without wearing a mask or staying 6 feet apart. However, masks remain important in many settings and will continue to be required at all Kaiser Permanente facilities. The mask guidance does not apply to high-risk activities or areas such as health care settings and public transportation, or travel. In addition, even after being fully vaccinated, anyone with symptoms of illness should resume wearing a mask and get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible.