PREPARING FOR YOUR FAMILY'S VACCINE VISITS: COVID-19 VACCINES

BEFORE THE VISIT

A little research before your vaccine visit can go a long way to reducing your stress and concerns. Credible information helps ensure healthy choices and builds vaccine confidence.

What you need to know about COVID-19

COVID (or COVID-19) is a severe viral disease that can affect the lungs as well as the vascular (or blood vessel) system and other organs such as the heart, brain, kidneys, pancreas, etc.

People who get COVID can suffer a wide range of symptoms, from sniffles to difficulty breathing. Often people notice that they cannot smell or taste anything, and also have high fevers, exhaustion, and severe coughing.

Severe complications from COVID can include:
- pnuemonia
- chronic fatigue
- injury to organs, such as heart, liver, and kidneys
- Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS)
- Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome
- septic shock
- blood clots
- death

Even mild COVID infections can cause a rare condition called Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C in children and MIS-A in adults). This syndrome is caused by swelling of various parts of the body including organs, skin, eyes, brain, and the gastrointestinal system. Symptoms include fever, belly pain, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, and headache.

MAKING YOUR CHILD MORE COMFORTABLE DURING THE VISIT

For younger children...

Spray Away. Ask for a cooling spray or pain-relieving ointment, which is applied on your child's arm or leg right before vaccination. Tell your provider you want this **before** the visit so they are ready for you.

Bring a Friend. Bring your child's favorite toy, blanket or book to help them focus on something positive during the vaccination visit.

For tweens and older...

Stay seated. Some people, particularly teenagers, can get dizzy after vaccination. It's a good idea to stay in your seat for a few minutes after getting your vaccine just to make sure you are not dizzy or feeling faint.

About mRNA Vaccines

mRNA is a set of instructions that teaches cells to make proteins. In the case of the COVID vaccine, the mRNA tells your body to make proteins that look just like the proteins from the outer part of a COVID virus, called spike proteins. These proteins without the rest of the COVID virus cannot give you COVID, but your body can then recognize the shape of those proteins and protect you against the virus.

Congratulations for protecting your family's health and future!
We know making the best health decisions for your family can sometimes be overwhelming. We here for you. If you need more information please visit www.VoicesForVaccines.org.

voices for vaccines
credible vaccine information for parents, from parents

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER VACCINATION

Understanding mild side effects vs. serious adverse reactions

Mild side effects are how you know a vaccine is doing its job: your immune system is recognizing an "invader" and preparing to fight it. Because with a vaccine it's a practice exercise and not the real thing, the immune response will usually be mild and go away on it's own in a few days. Some mild side effects for the COVID vaccine include:

Soreness where the vaccine was given

Dizziness or Fainting

Headache

Redness or swelling around the area where the vaccine was given

Nausea

Serious Adverse Reactions

Very rarely, some people, predominately male adolescents or young adults, may have a mild myocarditis or pericarditis (swelling of the heart or surrounding area) after receiving an mRNA vaccine.

This is usually mild and goes away on its own, and is characterized by:

- chest pain
- shortness of breath
- fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart.

How to treat normal immune responses

The best way to treat normal immune responses to vaccination include:

1) Apply a cold compress to the injection site for redness and swelling.
2) Take a pain reliever (analgesic) like Motrin® or Tylenol® or equivalent generic. Call your healthcare provide for dosage.

When to call your healthcare provider

Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) occur within second or minutes so in the extremely rare case that you have a serious reaction, you will likely still be in the doctor's office. More mild allergic reactions can happen several hours after vaccination (and rarely up to 24 hours later). If you notice an allergic reaction, you should contact your healthcare provider immediately.

It is very rare for someone to have a serious reaction to the vaccine, but it is possible to have a severe allergic reaction or, with the Johnson& Johnson vaccine (no longer preferred), a type of blood clotting problem called Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS).

Mild side effects will usually go away within a week of vaccination. But if you are concerned, you should call your healthcare provider.

Questions for your healthcare provider

Post-vaccine notes