

# Care after immunization: Infants and young children

Learn what to expect over the next few days and how to care for your child

## Side effects your child might have after some vaccines



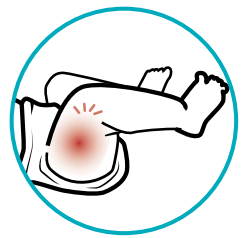
**Fever and chills**



**Tiredness and headache**

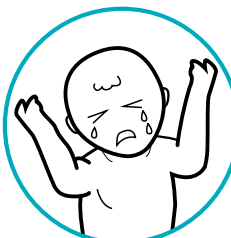


**Muscle and joint soreness**



**Pain, redness, and swelling where the vaccine was given**

*For COVID-19 vaccines:*  
can occur up to 7 days after



**Fussiness, crying, restlessness, and decreased appetite**



**After MMR and varicella vaccines: fever, rash, and other side effects may occur about 1-2 weeks after immunization**



**Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea**



**After the nasal spray influenza (flu) vaccine: nasal congestion and runny nose**



**After COVID-19 vaccines: swollen lymph nodes under armpit**

## Most side effects are mild and go away after 1-2 days

For vaccine-specific side effects, read the HealthLinkBC Files found at [immunizebc.ca/immunization-schedules/children](https://immunizebc.ca/immunization-schedules/children)

See next pages for:

How can I help my child feel better?

Medicines to help

When to seek medical attention



Available in 体中文 (Simplified Chinese), 繁體中文 (Traditional Chinese), فارسی (Farsi), 한국어 (Korean), ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (Punjabi), and other languages

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## How can I help my child feel better?



### For pain or swelling where the vaccine was given:

- ✓ Apply a cool, wet cloth or wrapped ice pack over the area.
- ✓ Move your child's arm or leg several times a day.
- ✓ Give medicine to help make them comfortable (*see below*).



### For fever:

- ✓ Let your child rest.
- ✓ Give lots of fluids to drink.
- ✓ Dress your child lightly.
- ✓ Give medicine to help reduce the fever and make them more comfortable (*see below*).

Body Site	Normal Range	Fever
armpit	36.5-37.5 °C	≥ 37.6 °C
mouth*	35.5-37.5 °C	≥ 37.6 °C
ear	35.8-38 °C	≥ 38.1 °C
rectal (bum)**	36.6-38 °C	≥ 38.1 °C

*Note: Measurements from forehead thermometers can be inaccurate.*

\* Do not use for children under 5 years of age.

\*\* Only use a rectal thermometer if you are comfortable doing so and a health care provider has shown you how to use it safely.

## Medicines to help with fever and pain

Medicines are not always needed to reduce a fever. They can be used to relieve aches and pains and to make your child more comfortable.

### There are two kinds of over-the-counter medicines you can give:

- **Acetaminophen**, such as Infant or Children's Tylenol®.
- **Ibuprofen**, such as Children's Advil®.  
*Do not use ibuprofen if your baby is under 6 months of age unless your doctor tells you to.*

### Safety tips when giving over-the-counter medicine to children:

- ✓ Always follow the directions on the label. Do not give more than the recommended amount.
- ✓ Do not give ASA (Aspirin®) to anyone younger than 18 years of age.

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## When to seek medical attention

### For fever

Fever is an expected side effect of vaccines. But sometimes, fever can be an early sign of an illness that is not related to the vaccine.

#### Seek medical attention right away if your child:

- ✓ Is less than 3 months and has a fever.
- ✓ Is 3-12 months and has a fever of 39°C or higher or a fever for more than 1 day.
- ✓ Is less than 2 years and has a fever for more than 1-2 days.
- ✓ Is more than 2 years and has a fever for more than 3 days.

### Other reasons to seek medical attention

Serious side effects after immunization are very rare. But if they do happen, it's important to act.

#### Seek medical attention right away if your child:

- ✓ Has signs or symptoms of a severe allergic reaction (for example, hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue, or lips). If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or your local emergency number.
- ✓ Has a seizure. Call 911 if the seizure lasts more than 3 minutes or if your child is less than 6 months.
- ✓ Received a COVID-19 vaccine and has chest pain, shortness of breath, or feeling of a fast-beating, fluttering, or pounding heart.
- ✓ Received the rotavirus vaccine and has repeated vomiting, a swollen tummy, or bloody stool.
- ✓ Shows any other worrisome signs or symptoms (for example, is dehydrated, not eating or drinking, has severe vomiting or diarrhea, is weak, pale, difficult to wake, or cries non-stop for a long time or longer than usual).

**Report any serious and/or unexpected side effects after immunization to your immunization provider/clinic or health care provider.**



**Find your child's immunization record at**

[healthgateway.gov.bc.ca](https://healthgateway.gov.bc.ca)