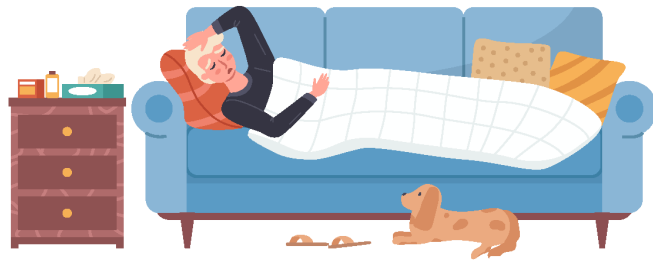


COVID-19 vaccine guidance

Saginaw County



HEALTH DEPARTMENT



COVID-19 VACCINES MAY COME WITH A KICK

What You Need to Know... But NOT Be Alarmed About

As always, the Saginaw County Health Department is giving it to you straight.

Some people experience short-term discomfort such as high fever, headaches, chills, and fatigue for 12-24 hours after vaccination and booster shot. The term used to describe this is “reactogenicity” – meaning the discomfort is only temporary and shouldn’t be alarming. In fact, it’s your immune system working just as it should.

But those who have experienced the side effects say it isn’t a walk in the park either.

So, to better prepare YOU for what could happen and to reassure you that it isn’t serious, here’s more about the COVID-19 vaccine.

COVID-19 VACCINES WILL NOT GIVE YOU COVID-19

According to the CDC, none of the vaccines currently in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19. The goal for each of them is to teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19.

The CDC says these symptoms – or side effects – are normal and are a sign that the body is building immunity.

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HOW BAD ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

Most people will escape side effects completely. For a small number of others, the reactogenicity is higher – typically after a second dose or booster shot. Technically, that means they had a great immune response to the first dose and saw the effects in the second dose. Overall, the reactogenicity of the COVID-19 vaccine is thought to be higher than most flu shots – something more along the lines of a tetanus shot (think sore arm) or shingles vaccine. But compared to the actual effects of COVID-19, it's definitely worth taking acetaminophen and toughing it out for one night. In the words of one researcher, given that COVID-19 can kill, it's a small price to pay for immunity!

mRNA VACCINES WILL NOT ALTER YOUR DNA

mRNA is basically instructions for how to make a protein. It is not able to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup (or DNA). The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enters the nucleus of a cell where our DNA is kept. Rather, COVID-19 vaccines that use mRNA work with our body's natural defenses to safely develop immunity to disease.



PEOPLE WHO HAVE GOTTEN SICK WITH COVID-19 MAY STILL BENEFIT FROM GETTING VACCINATED

Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, the CDC is advising everyone to get a COVID-19 vaccine and booster even if they have been sick with it.

At this time, we don't know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19. Early evidence suggests that the immunity you gain from having an infection – called natural immunity – may last 6 months.

The immunity produced by vaccination appear to last for at least 6 months as well. Booster shots are now recommended to maximize immunity overtime in the face of new variants.

Both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity are important aspects of COVID-19 that experts continue to learn and study.