

## Dos and don'ts after your first jab

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Got your first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine? Doctors have dished out some pointers you have to keep in mind, with the most important re minder being: Do not for get your second jab.



Medical experts have strictly instructed job takers not to skip their second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. “The second dose is more important than the first one as this is what will stay in the body as memory-T cells, Helper-T cells and matured B-cells toward off the infection later on,” said Dr Ravi Arora, specialist in internal medicine, endocrinology and diabetes at NMC Speciality Hospital in Abu Dhabi.

According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in the US, it typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity or protection against the virus after vaccination. This explains why there could be cases where a person who had taken the shot gets infected, experts said.

Specialist Dr Amaka Kate Uzu said that initially, the first dose of the vaccine would trigger the immune system and help it recognise the virus when it enters the body.

“This process typically takes a few weeks after the first dose of the vaccine, while taking the second dose further increases your level of immunity and sustains it for a longer period,” said Dr Uzu, family medicine consultant at Bareen International Hospital at MBZ City, Abu Dhabi.

Dr Nayzak Raoof, medical director at Burjeel Hospital for Advanced Surgery, noted that the response of the body’s immune system to a vaccine is ‘fairly complicated’. “In very simple words, the first dose of the vaccine stimulates the B cells (a certain type of the white blood cells) to manufacture cir cu lat ing an ti bod ies, these an ti bod ies are con sid ered the first line of de fence and are short-liv ing. The sec ond booster dose ini ti ates a sec ond type of im mu nity, which is the longer-last ing im mu nity and is cel - lu lar im mu nity. It is diffi cult to trans late that into fig ures or per cent ages in re gard to the Covid-19 vaccine which is newly in tro duced.”

The doc tor then ex plained the pro tec tion lev els by cit ing the ex ist ing MMR vaccine (measles, mumps, rubella) as an ex am ple. Af ter the first MMR shot, he said a pa tient de vel ops around 60 per cent pro tec tion, com pared to over 95 per cent after the second dose.

When it comes to health precautions after the jab, doctors said eating healthy would help.

Studies have found that increased fruit and vegetable intake has been associated with a better antibody re- sponse following vaccination, said Dr Prashant CK, a physician at Aster Clinic in Ajman.

“Adequate and appropriate nutrition is required for optimal performance of all cells in the body, and this in clude the cells of the immune system.”

Dr Raoof added: “In general, smoking and alcohol consumption decrease a person’s immunity. There is no doubt that smoking in relation to respiratory diseases has a horrendous impact on both chronic and acute res piratory illnesses.”

The sec ond dose is more im por tant than the first one as this is what will stay in the body as the cells that will ward off the in fec tion later on.”

Dr Amaka Kate Uzu, family medicine consultant, Bareen International Hospital