- Vaccination

What to expect when you're vaccinated

Pre- and post-COVID vaccine care

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Although you are one with the world in the pursuit of eradicating the vicious COVID-19 pandemic, you may still have some apprehensions about how you will fare after getting vaccinated. You are not alone. Many have the same valid concerns. There is no guarantee how an individual will react to the vaccination. There are, however, a number of people who fortunately got through their first and second doses without any side effects or symptoms. How then should you prepare yourself to get vaccinated?



First, consult your physician if you have any medical condition. It is your right as a patient to be informed. Consulting an expert is the wisest thing to do instead of turning to Doctor Google for answers that may be confusing, leaving you terrified with the mere thought of getting jabbed, therefore taking away your chance to be protected from severe symptoms of COVID infection, or succumbing to death.

Second, condition your mind and heart once you have made a decision to get vaccinated. Anxiety and overthinking can only make you get symptoms which can be mistakenly blamed on the vaccination. Mental and emotional stress can increase blood pressure, heart rate, and even respiratory rate. Bear in mind that you may or may not experience the following common side effects of the vaccination: pain and swelling on the injection site for about a few hours to one day, headache, weakness, fatigue, dizziness, diarrhea, nausea, sleepiness, fever, and the feeling of being unwell. It is best to be prepared and manage expectations.

Third, it is important to get adequate and quality sleep. Eat before you go for your vaccination appointment. This will prevent you from getting a headache or dizzy spells caused by lack of sleep and hypoglycemia (low blood glucose level) due to not having eaten. Again, these symptoms may be misconstrued as caused by the vaccine.

It is prudent to clear your schedule on the day of vaccination. Even if you do not get any side effects, it is good to take a day or two to rest. This will allow your immune system to optimize its function.

In the unfortunate event that you do experience these unpleasant side effects, do not panic. Here are some tips on how to manage certain symptoms.

1.
Before you leave the vaccination site, you will be advised to take paracetamol in case your temperature increases and you have a fever. You can have tepid sponge baths. Make sure you dry your body well and prevent exposure to draft.
2.
Hydrate well with water to lower your temperature. In case of diarrhea, drink water or fluids containing electrolytes (sodium, potassium, chloride). Apple and banana will also help form stool. Tea will help cleanse your digestive system too.
3.
If you feel nauseated, there is no better solution than having ginger. You can have it boiled with water as a drink or you can chew a small piece of raw ginger. You can smell it too.
4.
Apply cold compress on the swollen and painful injection site. Your arm will feel less sore. You can also make small movements, even with a bit of discomfort. Immobilizing your arm will only make the pain last longer.
5.
If you feel weak and have no appetite, remember to still take something to nourish your body and increase your strength. This is when our traditional comfort food lugaw will come in handy. You can also have other types of soups to nourish and hydrate you until you feel better.
6.
Have ice packs ready in case you get a headache. A dose of paracetamol available over the counter will also be helpful unless you have a medical condition that prevents you from taking this over-thecounter drug.
7.
Relax, rest, sleep as much as you need, pray or meditate, and practice deep breathing to help your body recover faster.
If you experience any symptoms like high blood pressure, fainting, difficulty of breathing, or a respiratory rate above 20 breaths per minute, seek medical attention immediately. These are not expected side effects of the vaccination.
It is prudent to clear your schedule on the day of vaccination. Even if you do not get any side effects, it is good to take a day or two to rest. This will allow your immune system to optimize its function.