



Post-Immunization Reactions

If you believe your child is having a reaction to a recent immunization, such as fever or swelling, please refer to this handout before you call our office. Most of your questions will be answered below.

Symptoms

- Most local swelling, redness and pain at the injection site begin within 24 hours of the shot. It usually lasts 2 to 3 days, but with DTaP can last 7 days.
- Fever with most vaccines begin within 24 hours and lasts 1 to 2 days.
- With live vaccines (MMR and chickenpox), fever and systemic reactions usually begin between 1 and 4 weeks.
- Severe allergic reactions are very rare, but can occur with any vaccine.

When to Call

- Call 911 Now If
 - Difficulty with breathing or swallowing
 - Not moving or very weak
 - Unresponsive or difficult to awaken
- Call Your Doctor Now If
 - Your child looks or acts very sick
 - Fever over 104°F and not improved 2 hours after fever medicine
 - High-pitched, unusual crying present over 1 hour
 - Crying continuously over 3 hours
 - Redness or red streaking around the injection site begins over 48 hours (2 days) after the shot
 - Redness or red streak around the injection site becomes larger than 1 inch
 - You think your child needs to be seen urgently
- Call Your Doctor the Following Morning If
 - You think your child needs to be seen, but not urgently
 - Fever present for more than 3 days
 - Fever returns after gone for over 24 hours
- Call Your Doctor During Regular Business Hours If
 - You have other questions or concerns
 - Redness, swelling or pain at the injection site persists over 3 days and is getting worse
 - Fussiness from vaccines persists over 3 days

Home Care Advice

Treatment for Common Immunization Reactions

Reassurance

- Immunizations (vaccines) protect your child against serious diseases.
- All of these reactions mean the vaccine is working.
- Your child's body is producing new antibodies to protect against the real disease.
- Most of these symptoms will only last 2 or 3 days.
- There is no need to see your child's doctor for normal reactions.

Local Reaction at Injection Site

- Cold Pack: For initial pain or tenderness at the injection site with any vaccine, apply a cold pack or ice in a wet washcloth to the area for 20 minutes as needed.
- Pain Medicine: Give acetaminophen or ibuprofen. (Note: Do not give ibuprofen to children less than 6 months old.)

Fever

- Fever with most vaccines begins within 12 hours and lasts 2 to 3 days. This is normal and harmless.
- For fevers above 102°F, give acetaminophen or ibuprofen. (Note: Do not give ibuprofen to children less than 6 months old.)
- For all fevers, give extra fluids and avoid excessive clothing or blankets (bundling).

General Reaction

- All vaccines can cause mild fussiness, irritability and restless sleep. While this is usually due to a sore injection site, sometimes the cause is less clear.
- Some children sleep more than usual. A decreased appetite and activity level are also common.
- These symptoms do not need any treatment and will usually resolve in 24-48 hours.