



## Background

COVID-19 vaccination is highly effective at preventing serious illness and death and is the central strategy for stopping this pandemic. Post-vaccination symptoms, such as pain and redness at the injection site and systemic symptoms (throughout the body) are common after receiving a dose of vaccine. While these side effects may affect a person's ability to do daily activities, they should resolve within a few days. Common post-vaccination systemic signs and symptoms are fever, fatigue, headache, chills, muscle pain, and nausea.

It is important for employers to have a plan to distinguish between post-vaccine systemic symptoms and the symptoms of acute COVID-19 infection. The following document is intended to provide return-to-work guidance for employers evaluating symptomatic workers post vaccination.

## Post-Vaccination Systemic Symptoms

*Common post COVID-19 vaccination systemic symptoms include:*

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle pains
- Fever
- Chills
- Nausea

The following symptoms are **NOT** associated with COVID-19 vaccination: cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, rhinorrhea, and/or change in taste or smell.

## *Timing of post-vaccination systemic symptoms*

Vaccine-related symptoms should typically:

- Start within the first 3 days after vaccination (the day of vaccination and the following 2 days)
- Resolve within 1-2 days after their initial onset.

## Recommendations

Employees who develop common post-COVID-19 vaccination systemic symptoms should be instructed to stay home. They do not need COVID-19 testing nor a medical assessment and may return to work when the symptoms have resolved as long as the employee meets ALL of the following criteria:

1. Their symptoms developed within 2 days after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine
2. They **do not** have any other symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, rhinorrhea, or change in taste or smell)
3. They have not had a known exposure to a person with COVID-19 within the past 14 days
4. Their symptoms resolved within 2 days of onset

Persons who fail to meet all of the criteria must follow standard workplace protocols for the evaluation of persons with possible COVID-19.

Note: Positive viral (molecular or antigen) tests for SARS-CoV-2, if performed, should not be attributed to the COVID-19 vaccine, as vaccination does not influence the results of these tests.



Employees with local injection site symptoms alone (e.g., pain, redness, and/or swelling) do not need to be restricted from work as these symptoms do not overlap with possible COVID-19 symptoms.

All employees, even those that are fully vaccinated, must continue to follow employer workplace infection control guidelines.

Additional Resources

- LAC DPH COVID-19 [After you get a vaccine](#)
- CDC [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#)