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Can you take ibuprofen after Covid vaccine? Effects of taking painkillers before and after receiving jab explained

Jenna Macfarlane 18 hrs ago



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Millions of people have received at their first dose or second dose of the Covid vaccine in the UK.



© Some experts believe that painkillers might interfere with what the Covid vaccine is trying to do (S...

The biggest vaccination programme in the history of the NHS is well underway.

As the rollout progresses, many have questions about the vaccine's mild side effects and if they are able to take ibuprofen or paracetamol to combat any pain following inoculation.

So, can you take ibuprofen after receiving the Covid vaccine?

Here is everything you need to know.

Read more: Brazil Covid variant: will Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines work, is it in the UK - and where in Scotland is it?

Can I take ibuprofen after the vaccine?

Following injection of the coronavirus jab, many people have experienced mild side effects.

You may wish to use pain relief to counter these, which can range from a headache to a fever.

Although there is limited evidence, some experts believe that painkillers might interfere with what the vaccine is trying to do.

The coronavirus vaccine works by tricking the body into believing it has a virus so it can build an immune defence against it.

That's what's happening when you experience muscle aches, arm soreness or any other symptom of inflammation after your jab. It just means the vaccine is working.

Certain painkillers which target inflammation, like ibuprofen, could therefore curb the immune response that the vaccine is trying to generate.

A study on mice in the *Journal of Virology* found that these drugs could lower the production of antibodies - the substances that fight the virus when it tries to infect cells.

For these reasons, some medical professionals say it is better not to take a painkiller after getting the vaccine if you do not need it, unless you routinely take them for a medical condition.

The official NHS website advises: "You can take painkillers, such as paracetamol, if you need to."

If you experience increased pain and redness around the jab location, or if your symptoms persist for a few more days, you should contact your doctor.

[Read more: Does Covid vaccine work against South African variant? How effective Pfizer and Oxford AstraZeneca jabs are on new strain](#)

Can you take painkillers before receiving the jab?

Doctors also advise that you should not take a painkiller as a preventative measure before receiving your coronavirus vaccine - unless you have been told to do so by a doctor.

While taking ibuprofen or paracetamol beforehand most likely won't do any harm, it is not necessary and there is a chance that the immune response to the jab could be weakened.

However, there is no specific evidence that taking a painkiller before being inoculated will impact your body's ability to build up immunity to the virus.

For that reason, the advice not to take a painkiller before is purely precautionary.

The World Health Organization has previously warned against taking painkillers such as ibuprofen around the time of vaccination, due to the lack of evidence on its effects.

Can you take ibuprofen if you have Covid?

There were early suggestions that taking ibuprofen could worsen Covid-19 symptoms.

However, the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) concluded that people can still take the drug, along with paracetamol, when they are ill with the virus if needed.

The Commission, which advises the UK Government on the safety, efficacy and quality of medicinal products, found there was "currently insufficient evidence to establish a link between use of ibuprofen, or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), and susceptibility to contracting COVID-19 or the worsening of its symptoms.

"Patients can take paracetamol or ibuprofen when self-medicating for symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever and headache, and should follow NHS advice if they have any questions or if symptoms get worse."

What are the vaccine side effects?

The most common side effects of the coronavirus vaccine are mild.

These can occur at the site of the injection, or throughout the body.

According to the NHS, this can include:

- A sore arm where the needle went in
- Feeling tired
- A headache
- Feeling achy
- Feeling or being sick.

If side effects are experienced, they are usually over within a few days.

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