

THE AFTER-SHOT GUIDE: What to Expect and What to Do

A POCKET REFERENCE FOR PATIENTS

This guide will help you know what to expect after you get an injection (or shot) for HIV prevention (PrEP) or treatment (ART) and what you and your healthcare provider can do to make your shots more comfortable. After reading this, you will understand:

1 What a normal or mild reaction to the shot looks like

2 What a serious reaction looks like and what to do if you have one

Knowing what to do can help you continue your shots as planned.



What is an injection site reaction?

- An injection site reaction is a normal way the body may respond to a shot. It occurs in the area where you received the injection and can happen with any type of shot.
- This happens because the body reacts to the needle poke or the medicine itself. It does not mean that you are having a full-body allergic reaction.
- Reactions usually get milder with each shot.

How do I know if I am having an injection site reaction?

Some signs of an injection site reaction are:

- Pain or tenderness
- A hard area or lump (this may last for a few months, which is normal)
- Swelling and/or bruising
- Redness or a change in skin color
- Itching and/or warmth
- Numbness where you got the shot

What can I do if I have an injection site reaction?

There are some things you can do to help decrease the swelling and pain. You can:



Take over-the-counter medicine, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen, as needed if it is safe for you.



Place a cool or warm compress on the red or swollen area.



Continue your normal activities. Gentle movement can help. Soreness and redness usually improve within a few days to a week.

When should I call the office?

Call the office if the area where you got the shot:

- Has redness that is spreading or getting worse instead of better
- Feels hot and is getting more red, swollen, or painful
- Is draining or has a painful lump with pus
- Has an open sore, broken skin, or skin turning dark



Call 911 or go to the emergency room if you have trouble breathing, swelling of your face or lips, or a rash with fever or blisters