

Menu



Watch Live

Quick links...

NEWS > FLORIDA NEWS



Floridians file hundreds of COVID-19 vaccine side effect reports

Chills, fatigue and dizziness among most common

-->



We take a look at how vaccine side effects are being tracked and reported.



Michael Whitworth experienced just mild symptoms following his first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.

“Just soreness in the arm,” he said.

So when it was time for his second dose recently, he didn’t expect to feel much.

“The second dose was a completely different story,” he explained.

Two hours after the shot, Whitworth said the pain and soreness in his arm became so severe, “I couldn’t really move at all.”

By hour 10, Whitworth said he had a low-grade fever, shaking, chills, his lips became pale and he started hallucinating.

“This was very, very off because I never hallucinated in my life, so I felt like I had been given an injection of mushrooms or something,” he said.

What Whitworth describes is extremely rare according to the [VAERS adverse reporting database](#). Co-managed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the database tracks adverse reactions following any kind of vaccination.

We downloaded the data and analyzed reports logged in the first four weeks of the COVID-19 rollout in Florida. The COVID vaccine made up more than 90% of all adverse reports filed from the Sunshine State.

As of Wednesday, reports had been filed by or on behalf of more than 330 people. Out of 850,000 doses administered by mid-January, the number of adverse events filed represented less than .04% of people who received at least one dose of the vaccine in Florida.

300 instances of adverse incidents, I wouldn't get worried. The idea is if on a population level we keep seeing the same adverse event that we wouldn't expect over and over and over again, it should prompt scientists to dive deeper into that.”

Salemi added that the reports logged into the database are not verified, voluntary, and submitted by anyone.

In the four-weeks we analyzed, the most common side effects included chills, fatigue and dizziness. Reports about females who received the vaccine were filed more than three times that of males.

Six Florida deaths were also reported to the database. The youngest, 56-year old South Florida doctor, Dr. Michael Gregory. Gregory was described as healthy before he died a few weeks after receiving the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. His death remains under investigation.

“We don't say these adverse events are specifically tied to this vaccine. We just know they happen after a person was vaccinated,” explained Salemi when we asked what the public should take away from reports logged with the government database. “You have to take these not with a grain of salt, but in many ways, they require way more investigation to verify the information and make sure that it is truly tied to the vaccine.”

Michael Whitworth plans on reporting his side effects to the VAERS database.

“I think hallucinations are kind of important. I think people will be a little less uncomfortable knowing these things can occur.”

For Whitworth, it's more than personal. He's a Tampa Bay medical doctor

“I take care of COVID patients, many of them, intubating them, and I take care of them in the operating room. They are in a horrific situation, so much so that I would not wish that on any of them and the side effects; yes, you have some but compared to the actual COVID, it’s nothing,” he said.

Dr. Michael Whitworth also hosts a Facebook page in the Tampa Bay region focused on evidence-based COVID-19 information. [Click here](#) for more.

To report side effects to the VAERS reporting system, [click here](#).

You can also report side effects on your phone by [clicking here](#).



Let us know about any concerns you have on how the coronavirus is being handled by the state and local governments.

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

Subject

Your Name *
First Name Last Name

Your E-mail Address *
ex: myname@example.com

Phone Number -
Area Code Phone Number

Tip Information *

Copyright 2021 Scripps Media, Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

[Report a typo](#)

Sign up for the **Headlines Newsletter** and receive up to date information.

E-mail

Submit



Watch CourtTV, the only network in the world with cameras in the courtroom, to see LIVE gavel-to-gavel coverage of MN v. Chauvin



Scripps Local Media
© 2021 Scripps Media, Inc

[News](#) [Video](#) [Good Morning Tampa Bay](#)
[Driving Tampa Bay Forward](#) [Taking Action for You](#)
[Taste and See Tampa Bay](#) [Support](#)

[Site Map](#) [Do Not Sell My Info](#) [Privacy Policy](#)
[Journalism Ethics Guidelines](#) [Terms of Use](#) [EEO](#) [Careers](#)
[FCC Public Files](#) [Public File Contact](#)
[Accessibility Statement](#) [Closed Captioning Contact](#)
[FCC Application](#)