Should I work out after receiving mRNA COVID-19 vaccination?

Reports that the second dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines may be associated with a small risk of myocarditis* and pericarditis* in young men have been brought to the fore.

1.6 cases per 100,000 doses for mRNA vaccines in the US (Comparable to the risk of anaphylaxis observed in Singapore)

To Date

There is no observed incremental risk of myocarditis and pericarditis after the first dose of vaccine.

Precaution

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has recommended that people, particularly adolescents and younger men, should avoid strenuous physical activity for a week after receiving either of their mRNA Covid-19 vaccination doses.

How do I determine the physical activities to avoid?

Low Intensity:
You can walk and sing while exercising without feeling out of breath.

Examples of light intensity exercises to consider
• Stretching
• Light walking
• Housework

Moderate Intensity:
50-70% of your maximum heart rate (MHR), calculated by 220 - Age

Examples of moderate intensity exercises to avoid
• Weight training
• Brisk walking
• Slow jog (5-6km/hr)
• Cycling
• Swimming

High Intensity:
70% to 85% MHR (OR you are unable to speak in a complete sentence during the workout)

Examples of high intensity exercises to avoid
• Circuit training
• Vigorous forms of weight training
• Sprinting
• Increasing the distance of swimming

As we gain more understanding of the potential side effects of the COVID-19 vaccination, it will be wise to take all precautions to avoid complications. On that note, avoiding strenuous exercise after vaccination to prevent potential adverse cardiac event from possible myocarditis is reasonable. This is especially so when we are unable to predict who are the at-risk individuals.

Seek medical attention if you experience any of symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath and irregular heartbeat within a week after COVID-19 vaccination.

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