

HMH COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma: FAQs for Patients & Donors

Q1: What is convalescent plasma and how is it being used to treat COVID-19 patients?

Convalescent plasma is found in the blood of recovered COVID-19 patients. By transfusing the antibody-rich plasma of a recovered patient to an infected patient, the goal is for the antibodies to start fighting off the virus, allowing the infected patient's body to start ramping up its own defense. This type of treatment has previously been used to fight other viral outbreaks including a virus that's cousin to the one responsible for COVID-19, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), which sickened thousands in 2002-2003.

There are several clinical trials currently underway that use convalescent plasma on COVID-19 patients including the National Expanded Access Program (led by the Mayo Clinic) and a local study run by Hackensack University Medical Center (HUMC). Patients who qualify to participate in the clinical trials receive infusions of the plasma that were donated by COVID-19 survivors.

Q2: How can I participate in one of the convalescent plasma clinical trials being offered?

COVID-19 positive patients have to meet specific criteria in order to participate in the available clinical trials, including:

- Being over the age of 18
- Tested positive for COVID-19
- Currently hospitalized as a result of COVID-19 and have certain levels of severity as defined by each specific clinical trial

If you believe you or someone you are caring for might be eligible to participate, please contact the physician providing care.

Q3: Who is eligible to donate blood for convalescent plasma therapy?

There's a great need for blood at this time. Any survivor of COVID-19 may be eligible to donate. Potential donors must have tested positive for COVID-19, and have since recovered.

Q4: How do I donate?

There are several options.

- **Contact your local blood bank.** The National Expanded Access Program is looking for as many good donors as possible. Those who are interested, can to donate plasma through their local blood bank, including:
 - [Vitalant](#)
 - [NYBC](#)
 - [The Red Cross](#)

These blood banks support the Mayo Clinic-led Expanded Access Program, started by the FDA. These programs seek those who were COVID-19-positive – but who have since tested negative. The American Association of Blood Banks (AABB) also offers [a tool to locate blood donation sites closest to you](#).

- **Complete HUMC’s survey to see if you qualify to donate for the medical center’s clinical trial.** [Fill out the survey here](#). Donating to HUMC’s clinical trial involves a screening process to find the patients with the most antibodies. This program seeks: All patients over the age of 18, non-pregnant, that were COVID-19 confirmed with a positive COVID-19 test, have since tested negative, and have been symptom free for at least 14 days.

Q5: What is the difference between the HUMC study and other convalescent plasma studies?

What could set the HUMC program apart from similar programs across the country is that HUMC’s program has rigorous criteria for identifying the donors with the most antibodies, while also infusing a larger amount of plasma than some of the other studies. Anyone with the right amount of antibodies may be eligible to donate to HUMC’s clinical trial.

The National Expanded Access program led by the Mayo Clinic is currently available at all Hackensack Meridian *Health* hospital locations (while plasma supplies last) while patients can only participate in the HUMC program if they are admitted to that facility.