

# Monoclonal Antibody Infusion Therapy: A Treatment for COVID-19

## What is COVID-19 (Coronavirus)?

COVID-19 is the name of the infection caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. Coronavirus causes illnesses that affect your lungs making it hard to breathe. Some of these viruses spread easily from person to person.

Current symptoms reported for people with COVID-19 have included:

- fever
- cough
- trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- other symptoms include muscle aches, headache, sore throat, diarrhea, or loss of taste or smell.

Symptoms range from mild to severe.

## What are Monoclonal Antibodies?

Your immune system makes antibodies when your body senses something is threatening it. Antibodies are proteins that help fight off an illness. They can also provide immunity (protection from disease).

Monoclonal antibodies are made in a lab and are similar to the antibodies your body makes. They are used to treat diseases. Like your body's own antibodies, monoclonal antibodies recognize specific targets.

## What is Monoclonal Antibody Infusion Therapy?

Monoclonal antibody infusion therapy is used to treat a person who has COVID-19.

There are two different medicines that can be used during this treatment.

- bamlanivimab (one antibody)
- Regeneron cocktail (a mix of two antibodies: casirivimab and imdevimab).

Both of these are known as “investigational” medicines. This means that they are still being studied and not all of the risks are known at this time. Early research has shown that they are safe and can reduce your risk of being admitted to the hospital.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved these medicines for emergency use. Although they are not FDA-approved, they have met certain criteria (safety, performance and labeling) to be used when there are no other medicines available.

## How is This Treatment Given?

This treatment is given by infusion therapy. You receive the medicine through an intravenous (IV) catheter (thin tube) inserted into a vein in your arm.

The medicine enters your body slowly over 1 hour. After your infusion, you will be watched closely for any side effects for 1 hour. You only need this treatment one time.

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## Who Can Have This Treatment?

This treatment is only for people at increased risk of serious illness due to their age or health history. People with certain risk factors can have a more severe case of COVID-19.

To have this treatment, you need to:

- have tested positive for COVID-19
- have at least one risk factor for severe COVID-19
- have mild or moderate symptoms
- not be in the hospital
- have the infusion within 10 days of when your symptoms start
- be age 12 or older
- weigh 88 pounds or more.

## What Should I Tell My Health Care Provider?

Before having this treatment, it is important to tell your health care provider if you:

- have a serious illness
- have any allergies
- are taking any medicines (including all prescription, over-the-counter, vitamins, herbal or natural products)
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.

## What are the Benefits?

This treatment will help:

- keep you feeling well
- lower your risk of getting worse from COVID-19 or being admitted to the hospital
- shorten the length of time your symptoms last.

## What are the Possible Side Effects?

This treatment can cause side effects, which can differ from person to person. It is still being studied and there could be other side effects that have not been reported.

Common side effects include:

- nausea (upset stomach)
- vomiting (throwing up)
- diarrhea
- headache
- dizziness or lightheadedness
- itching.

At the infusion site, you may have pain, bleeding, bruising, soreness, swelling and possible infection.

Tell your health care provider right away if you have any side effect that bothers you or does not go away.

Some serious side effects are possible, but not as common. If you have an allergic reaction, call 911 or have someone drive you to the Emergency Department right away.

Symptoms include fever, chills, nausea, headache, shortness of breath, low blood pressure, wheezing, swelling of your lips, face, or throat, rash including hives, itching, muscle aches, and dizziness.

After you have received care, tell your health care provider about your side effects.

## Will My Insurance Cover the Cost of This Treatment?

Your insurance provider will be billed for part of this treatment (giving you the medicine). Call your insurance provider to see how much you will need to pay. If you do not have insurance or have any questions, talk with your health care provider.

**Information adapted from the  
U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
and the National Institutes of Health.**