



April 9, 2020

Dear Prospective Blood Donor,

Blood Bank of Alaska (BBA) is in critical need of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) to donate convalescent plasma.

### **What is Convalescent Plasma?**

This is plasma collected from patients who have recovered from an infection. Plasma from recovered patients contains antibodies that may be used to treat critically ill patients currently infected with the same disease.

While clinical trials are currently being performed for widespread use of convalescent plasma to treat patients with COVID-19, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized patients with, or at risk of, severe or life-threatening COVID-19 disease to receive this treatment through an expanded access program (1).

### **Is Donating Blood and Convalescent Plasma Safe?**

If you are a prospective first-time donor of blood or blood products, please know that the donation process is safe (2). Every day, people around the nation save lives by donating blood. BBA is licensed by the FDA and is accredited by AABB (formerly known as the American Association of Blood Banks). Our staff is available to answer any questions that you may have regarding blood donation.

There is currently no evidence indicating that SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2), the virus responsible for causing COVID-19, can be transmitted via blood transfusion; further, patients who receive these convalescent plasma treatments are already positive for and experiencing severe symptoms from COVID-19.

SARS-CoV-2 is novel (new) and clinical trials are still being performed regarding the effectiveness of convalescent plasma for COVID-19 patients. However, according to the FDA, convalescent plasma is a promising treatment that has also been studied in outbreaks of other respiratory infections including the 2009-2010 H1N1 influenza virus pandemic, 2003 SARS-CoV-1 epidemic, and the 2012 MERS-CoV epidemic (1).

### **Who is Eligible?**

Prospective convalescent plasma donors must meet all screening and eligibility requirements for regular blood donation. Female donors must either have never been pregnant or else test negative for HLA antibodies (HLA antibody tests performed by BBA at time of donation). All prospective donors must meet either of the following conditions:

- Donor must have had a previous diagnosis of COVID-19 documented by a laboratory test and complete resolution of mild to severe symptoms for 28 or more days **or**
- Donor must have had a previous diagnosis of COVID-19 documented by a laboratory test, a complete resolution of mild to severe symptoms for 14-27 days, and a subsequent negative test result for COVID-19.

Please call us at (907) 222-5630 if you have any questions regarding your eligibility.

### **How Does Donating Convalescent Plasma Work?**

For a donor, donating convalescent plasma is similar to a regular blood donation. Convalescent plasma may be donated either through whole blood or apheresis (an automated process where the donor provides select blood components i.e., plasma, platelets, or red blood cells).



**Blood Bank of Alaska**  
Helping Alaska patients in need

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BBA is following all FDA guidelines regarding this emerging investigational treatment. We are also following recommendations established by the CDC in order to limit disease transmission (including social distancing) and all staff is wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Please visit our website at <https://www.bloodbankofalaska.org> and click on the “Become a Convalescent Plasma Donor” link under the “COVID-19” tab to become a donor.

We welcome you to become a Hero Donor today. This is your opportunity to provide the gift of life to individuals in need and make a personal impact during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you,

Robert W. Scanlon  
Chief Executive Officer

**References:**

1. [FDA: Investigational COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma - Emergency INDs:](https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/investigational-new-drug-ind-or-device-exemption-ide-process-cber/investigational-covid-19-convalescent-plasma-emergency-inds)  
<https://www.fda.gov/vaccines-blood-biologics/investigational-new-drug-ind-or-device-exemption-ide-process-cber/investigational-covid-19-convalescent-plasma-emergency-inds>
2. [FDA Statement: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Update: Blood Donations:](https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-blood-donations)  
<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-blood-donations>