

Convalescent Plasma Frequently Asked Questions

What is convalescent plasma?

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

Is donating blood and convalescent plasma safe?

If you are considering donating blood for the first time, 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.

How do I know if I am eligible to donate convalescent plasma?

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 are performed by BBA at time of donation). Additionally, 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.

I did not receive a positive test for COVID-19. Can I use a note from my healthcare provider to show that I had COVID-19?

No. BBA is only accepting recovered patients with documented laboratory test results for convalescent plasma donation.

What do I need to do to become a convalescent plasma donor?

If you feel you may be a qualified donor for convalescent plasma, please complete the following steps:

1. Complete our [COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma Donor Request Form](#) available online and at any BBA location.
2. Once completed, please submit the form and a copy of your test results for COVID-19 to BBA through any of the following ways:
 - Via email to QualityAssuranceDepartment@bbak.org
 - Via fax to (907) 563-1371
 - Drop off at any [BBA location](#)

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Note: If you do not have a copy of your test results, please request that your licensed healthcare provider or the State of Alaska send them to BBA at QualityAssuranceDepartment@bbak.org.

3. Once we receive your completed form as well as a copy of your test results, we will contact you to schedule your appointment to donate!

How do I complete the donor request form online?

1. Access the [Donor Request Form](#).
2. Download the form to your computer or phone (Note: Depending on your web browser, this may not be necessary).
3. Complete the required fields.
4. Save or print the form.
5. Submit the completed form through any of the following options:
 - Via email to QualityAssuranceDepartment@bbak.org
 - Via fax to (907) 563-1371
 - Print and drop off at any [BBA location](#)

How do I save the donor request form?

To save the donor request form to a desktop computer, please follow the instructions below for your preferred web browser:

Internet Explorer (IE) 11

- Complete the form in your browser.
- Click Save.
- Save the file to your computer.

Chrome

- Download the blank form to your computer.
- Complete the form using your computer's PDF viewing program (e.g. Adobe Reader, Adobe Acrobat).
- Save the completed form to your computer using your PDF program.

Chrome (alternate method)

- Complete the form in your browser.
- Press Ctrl+S or right click and select Save as.
- Save the file to your computer.

I am having problems completing the donor request form electronically. What should I do?

Paper forms are available at [each of our locations](#) if you are having difficulty completing the form electronically.

Can I donate convalescent plasma at any Blood Bank of Alaska (BBA) location?

BBA is currently only collecting convalescent plasma at the following locations:

- Anchorage main center (located at 1215 Airport Heights)

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- Collection hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
- Fairbanks facility (located at 3010 Airport Way)
 - Collection hours are Tuesday through Thursday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Do I need an appointment?

Yes, appointments are required at this time. Appointments are available during the following times:

- Anchorage main facility Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
- Fairbanks facility Tuesday through Thursday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

Once we receive your completed [Donor Request Form](#) and a copy of your test results, we will contact you to schedule an appointment.

How effective is convalescent plasma at treating 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).

How often can I donate convalescent plasma?

This depends on whether you donate via whole blood donation or apheresis (an automated process where the donor provides select blood components i.e., plasma, platelets, or red blood cells).

After you donate, our staff will provide you with your next available donation date for convalescent plasma.

References:

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