

# Feds ask survivors to use their “special power” to fight COVID-19

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Patients who’ve recently recovered from COVID-19 are being recruited to take part in a national campaign and they can expect to receive messages on how to do so from their physician, hospital, health insurer, pharmacy, or even the lab that analyzed their test.

“Because your immune system fought off COVID-19, you now have antibodies in you that could help others fight it off too,” states a message on The Fight Is in Us.org, the website for the campaign seeking blood donations from people who have recovered from COVID-19.

Specifically, the campaign is requesting plasma from patients who have received a positive U.S. Food & Drug Administration-authorized COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or antibody test in the past 14 to 60 days.

Convalescent plasma, found in the blood of COVID-19 survivors, contains antibodies that may be useful in the prevention or treatment of the disease. The donations will be used for either direct transfusions to patients or in scientific research toward treatments and cures.

The website contains guidance on how and where to donate and has links to the latest studies on using convalescent plasma in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Also listed are the organizations, institutions and companies involved in the effort such as the American Red Cross, Johns Hopkins University and Uber Health, which is offering patients free rides to designated donation centers.

Donors must be:

- 18 years or older.
- Weigh more than 110 pounds.
- Symptom-free for at least 14 days prior to donation.
- Have not tested positive for HIV or hepatitis B or C.

Antibody concentrations in individuals who tested positive more than 60 days ago will likely be too low to be useful, according to preliminary research cited on the website.

The federal government has asked physicians, hospitals, health insurers, pharmacies and labs to communicate with their patients and customers “in the most effect way possible” to achieve the highest number of donors.

Sample text and e-mail messages have been supplied, including one that describes the potential benefits of convalescent plasma as “a special power that only survivors have.”

Research has shown COVID-19 convalescent plasma (CCP) to be safe for use in patients. Studies are ongoing to determine efficacy. CCP transfusions have received temporary authorization for emergency use and are considered an experimental approach.