

FDA tackles questions about blood donation, face masks during pandemic

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(HealthDay)—Is it safe to donate blood during the coronavirus

pandemic? Do cloth face masks offer meaningful protection against COVID-19?

These are among the questions Americans are asking, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and the agency is offering some answers.

A number of measures are being taken to protect the nation's [blood](#) supply, according to the FDA. Blood donors must be healthy and feel well on the day of donation. Routine donor screening should prevent people with respiratory infections from donating blood.

However, donors are told to contact the donor center if they become ill after giving blood, so that their blood or plasma won't be used. No cases of COVID-19 have been linked to blood or products made from blood collected from donors who developed COVID-19 after donating, the FDA said in a news release.

And giving blood is one way for you to help during this public health emergency. If you're healthy and want to donate blood, contact a local donation center to make an appointment, the agency advised.

There's another way you might be able to help—by donating convalescent plasma, the FDA said. Scientists are investigating its use to treat COVID-19.

Convalescent plasma is the liquid part of blood that's collected from patients who have recovered from COVID-19 and have antibodies in their blood against the virus.

The FDA pointed out that COVID-19 [convalescent plasma](#) can only be collected from recovered patients if they're otherwise eligible to donate blood and meet other requirements. Check with your local blood center.

Many people also wonder if they should wear a [face mask](#) when they're out in public.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public when it's difficult to maintain social distancing measures, in places such as grocery and drug stores. The purpose is to slow the spread of the coronavirus and to help keep people who may have the virus and do not know it from infecting others, the FDA said.

More information: The American Red Cross has more on the [coronavirus and blood donations](#).

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