

Moderna: Early coronavirus vaccine results are encouraging

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This transmission electron microscope image shows SARS-CoV-2 -- also known as 2019-nCoV, the virus that causes COVID-19 -- isolated from a patient in the US. Virus particles are shown emerging from the surface of cells cultured in the

lab. The spikes on the outer edge of the virus particles give coronaviruses their name, crown-like. Credit: NIAID-RML

An experimental vaccine against the coronavirus showed encouraging results in very early testing, triggering hoped-for immune responses in eight healthy, middle-aged volunteers, its maker a project called "Operation Warp Speed" to develop a vaccine and hopefully have 300 million doses by January.

Worldwide, about a dozen vaccine candidates are in the first stages of testing or nearing it. Health officials have said that if all goes well, studies of a potential vaccine might wrap up by very late this year or early next year.

More than 4.7 million infections and 315,000 deaths from the coronavirus have been confirmed worldwide since it emerged in China late last year. There are no specific approved treatments, although several are being used on an emergency basis after showing some promise in preliminary testing.

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