

Polish miners' blood boosts search for new COVID-19 drug

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Biomed Lublin's Piotr Fic said the firm was starting production of a plasma-derived drug against COVID-19 today, August 18, with clinical trials expected from October end

Blood donations from Polish coal miners who recovered from coronavirus have helped research into a new plasma-derived drug, researchers said on Tuesday, as they announced the start of production and testing in Poland.

The pandemic has hit particularly hard in the Silesia [coal](#) basin in southern Poland, although the national rate has remained relatively low compared to much of western Europe.

"Today we are starting production," Piotr Fic, a member of the board of the biotech company Biomed Lublin, told a press conference at the medical university in Lublin, eastern Poland.

"Probably by the end of October we will be able to supply the drug for clinical tests," he said.

Krzysztof Tomaszewicz from public hospital PSK1 in Lublin, one of the participants in the project, said: "Our expectations are really high, optimistic and based on some experience."

The company is planning to produce an initial batch of 3,000 doses of the drug for testing and said it would eventually be able to produce around 30,000 to 40,000 doses, depending on having sufficient plasma available.

Convalescent plasma, the fluid in [blood](#) teeming with antibodies post-illness, has proven effective in small studies to treat COVID-19.

The researchers said they had collected around 150 litres of plasma for initial production.



The logo of Biomed Lublin whose shares have shot up on the Warsaw stock exchange since the start of the pandemic

Biomed's CEO Marcin Pirog in a statement said the miners from Jastrzebska Spolka Weglowa (JSW), a company with five [coal mines](#), deserved "special recognition" for their [blood donations](#).

Since the start of the pandemic, shares in Biomed Lublin have shot up on the Warsaw stock exchange from around 1 Polish zloty to 24.9 zlotys (5.6 euros) on Tuesday.

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