

# Researchers test antibody drug as treatment for COVID-19

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Stanford Medicine researchers are investigating whether a combination of specific antibodies can reduce early symptoms of COVID-19 in people with mild to moderate cases of the disease.

heir effort is part of a multisite clinical trial of an antibody drug developed by Eli Lilly and AbCellera that aims to enroll 550 participants at hospitals and medical centers nationwide.

Andra Blomkalns, MD, principal investigator of the Stanford trial site, said she hopes to enroll 20 to 40 participants who have tested positive for COVID-19 at Stanford Health Care's Marc and Laura Andreessen Emergency Department.

"The goal is to see if we can get [sick people](#) better faster, reducing both the length of their illness and how long they are shedding the [virus](#), and therefore help prevent others from getting sick," said Blomkalns, professor and chair of emergency medicine. "I think this treatment shows great promise."

It's a Phase II trial, which means the treatment has already undergone testing for safety in humans and is now being evaluated for both safety and effectiveness.

The experimental treatment uses [antibodies](#) identified in the blood of people who have recovered from COVID-19.

"An antibody is like a mask put onto the virus," Blomkalns said. "It sticks to the virus and doesn't allow it to attach or inject itself into the host cell."

Stanford researchers are contacting patients within 24 hours if they test positive for the virus. Those who choose to participate in the trial will receive an injection at the emergency department's research area. Some will get the antibody treatment; others will get a placebo.

Follow-up assessments will include blood draws and samples taken from the back of the upper throat by [health care workers](#) at participants'

homes to measure how much virus is in the body at various times during the 12-week study.

"Our hope is to effect treatment early in the course of disease, before it has time to progress further and potentially damage organs," Blomkalns said.

Early results from the trial are expected later this month.

Provided by Stanford University Medical Center

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