



Monoclonal Antibodies – FAQs for Patients

Recently, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued an emergency authorization allowing the monoclonal antibody Bamlanivimab to be used by patients who have tested positive for the coronavirus and who are at high risk for progressing to severe COVID-19 and/or hospitalization.

Henry Ford has received a very limited supply of this monoclonal antibody treatment from the state of Michigan. Because of the limited supply and because of how the treatment can be used, Henry Ford, in concert with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the state of Michigan, have developed specific protocols for administration to COVID-19 patients in an outpatient setting (i.e. not hospitalized) who meet the specific criteria.

Please see the following frequently asked questions to learn more about this treatment.

What is an antibody?

Antibodies are proteins that are produced naturally by the immune system. They are one of the primary ways the body defends itself against diseases. Antibodies work by recognizing disease-causing agents, such as bacteria, viruses, or cancer cells in the body. Once antibodies recognize these agents, they destroy them or block the action of the agent so that they can no longer do harm to other cells in the body.

What is a monoclonal antibody?

Monoclonal antibodies work in the same way as our bodies' naturally occurring antibodies except that monoclonal antibodies are laboratory-made proteins. Once they are introduced into the body, they help the immune system fight a virus or stop it from overreacting dangerously.

What is the difference between a vaccine and a monoclonal antibody?

Whereas a vaccine is used to prevent an infection, a monoclonal antibody is used as a treatment in someone who already has acquired the infection.

How are monoclonal antibodies being used to fight the coronavirus?

Very recently, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an emergency authorization allowing the monoclonal antibody Bamlanivimab to be used by patients who have tested positive for the coronavirus and who are at high risk for progressing to severe COVID-19 and/or hospitalization.

Bamlanivimab is directed against the spike protein of the coronavirus, designed to block the virus' attachment and entry into human cells. Because of this process, it can prevent the coronavirus from replicating throughout the body.

When should the monoclonal antibody treatment be given?

Clinical trials show that the monoclonal antibody treatment works best when it is given soon after the coronavirus infection occurs, or approximately within ten days from when someone starts to experience symptoms.

Who can receive the monoclonal antibody treatment?

Priority will be given to those individuals who have additional risks for severe COVID-19 infection requirements and meet certain requirements.

The monoclonal antibody treatment should be given to adults or children between the ages of 12 and 17 who meet the following criteria:

- Had a positive COVID-19 test within 4 days
- Onset of symptoms began no more than 5 days ago

Your Henry Ford provider will help to determine if you (or your family member) are eligible to receive the treatment.

Who should NOT receive the monoclonal antibody treatment?

The monoclonal antibody treatment should not be given to the following patients:

- Patients who are hospitalized due to COVID-19 **OR**
- Patients who require oxygen therapy due to COVID-19 **OR**
- Patients who require an increase in baseline oxygen flow rate due to COVID-19 in those on chronic oxygen therapy

If I have not had COVID-19 or if I have tested negative for COVID-19, can I get the monoclonal antibody treatment?

The monoclonal antibody treatment is only for people who have COVID-19. It is not a preventive measure, like a vaccine. It is a treatment that can be used by specific COVID-19 positive individuals to reduce their risk of hospitalization or to reduce their risk of severe complications from COVID-19.

What is the benefit of receiving the monoclonal antibody treatment?

Early evidence from clinical trials shows that if the treatment is done soon after someone becomes infected with the coronavirus, they might reduce their chances of needing a visit to the doctor or being hospitalized. Studies show that this benefit is particularly true for older and obese patients with underlying health conditions who are at higher risk for COVID-19 complications.

How is the treatment given?

The treatment is given through a one-time intravenous (IV) infusion.

How long does the treatment take?

The infusion procedure itself takes one hour. But plan for an approximate three-hour visit. Your three-hour visit includes checking in, prepping you for the procedure as well as monitoring you after the procedure.

What are the potential side effects of the monoclonal antibody treatment?

Patients must be monitored closely after the treatment for the potential of adverse reactions. Possible side effects include anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction) and infusion-related reactions, such as fever, chills, nausea, diarrhea, dizziness, headache, itching and vomiting. Studies are ongoing, so it is possible that there are additional risks we don't yet know about.

How can I receive the monoclonal antibody treatment?

If you received a positive COVID-19 test from Henry Ford in the past 4 days, contact your Henry Ford provider will help to determine whether you are an eligible candidate to receive the treatment.

If you are interested in the treatment for a family member, please call:

- Detroit or Southeast Michigan Patients: [\(800\) 436-7936](tel:8004367936)
- Jackson or South Central Michigan Patients: [\(517\) 205-4800](tel:5172054800)

Where will I go to receive the treatment?

If you are eligible to receive the monoclonal antibody treatment, your Henry Ford provider or a member of your Henry Ford care team will inform of you where you need to go to receive treatment. Your care team will also inform you of what to expect before, during and after your treatment.

How much does the treatment cost?

Patients should contact their insurance company to determine the cost of the treatment.