



National Emergency Blood Management Committee (NEBMC)

March 31, 2020

Statement on Convalescent Plasma and Intravenous Immune Globulin for Treatment of COVID-19 Infection

COVID-19 convalescent plasma is the plasma collected from patients who have recovered from COVID-19. These patients will have developed specific antibodies while fighting off the virus. In theory, these antibodies could be the basis of a treatment to help others.

The safety and efficacy of convalescent plasma in the treatment of COVID-19 has not yet been established. However, concerned patients, family members, physicians and nurses have requested that this product be made available based on theoretical and anecdotal evidence of its plausible efficacy in the absence of other known effective therapy treatments at this time.

Canadian Blood Services is working to determine how convalescent plasma could be collected from Canadian donors and is in discussions with Health Canada to determine the necessary steps to begin production of this product. Concurrently, Canadian Blood Services is collaborating with Héma-Quebec, national testing laboratories, the scientific community, public health officials and others to determine how donors could be identified, screened, and tested.

Canadian Blood Services is committed to working with Canadian physicians and scientists towards initiating a clinical trial to support the use of this product in patients with COVID-19. Patients will only be able to receive therapy with COVID-19 convalescent plasma in the context of a clinical trial and many Canadian investigators are collaborating to optimize the creation of this opportunity in order to evaluate the safety and efficacy of this therapy. As the only regulated blood operator in Canada (except Quebec) Canadian Blood Services will be the only entity undertaking collection and production of convalescent plasma in Canada when it becomes available.

There is no evidence to support the use of intravenous immune globulin (IVIg) for the treatment of COVID-19 infection and should not be used for this indication alone. It is critical to prioritize the use of IVIG for patients with established clinical indications to preserve the adequacy of IVIg supply into the future.

Please refer to the nacblood.ca website for information related to convalescent plasma and IVIg in the context of COVID-19 infection. In the coming weeks Canadian Blood Services will have more information to share on the role it may be able to play in the collection of convalescent plasma.

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