

SEEKING INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE RECOVERED FROM COVID-19 TO DONATE PLASMA TO HELP PATIENTS FIGHTING THE INFECTION

New study, led by physician researchers from Renown Health and University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine seeks to understand how the immune system responds to COVID-19 with goal of developing a new treatment



RENO, Nev. (May 8, 2020) – Individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 may now be able to help patients currently fighting the infection by donating their plasma. Those who have recovered from the infection may have COVID-19 antibodies in their blood. These antibodies provided one way for their immune systems to fight the virus when they were sick, so their blood may be used to help others fight off the disease through convalescent plasma.

Convalescent plasma is a component of blood from recovered patients that may contain precious COVID-19 antibodies. Antibodies are proteins that might help fight the infection. In this study, we will be collecting plasma from patients who have recovered from COVID-19 and investigating its efficacy in helping treat other patients with COVID-19. Convalescent plasma is being investigated for treatment of COVID-19 because there is no approved treatment for the disease and there is information that suggests it might help some patients recover from COVID-19.

Renown Health and the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine (UNR Med) are leading a study locally to better understand how the body's immune system responds to the virus, how it presents in northern Nevada and ultimately, aid in developing a new treatment for COVID-19.

“Renown and UNR Med are at the forefront of conducting essential research to increase the health and safety of our community,” said Sara Healy, MD, MPH, principal investigator of the study and a pediatric infectious disease physician at Renown Children’s Hospital and UNR Med. “So little is known about effectively treating COVID-19 and we are venturing into new territory. This important study is instrumental in helping us understand the immune systems of people who were affected by COVID-19, and with their help, getting us one step closer to finding a treatment for the disease that has significantly impacted our nation and our community.”

“COVID-19 survivors are in a unique and exciting position to be a part of something much bigger than the virus,” said [Mark Riddle](#), MD, DrPH, FISTM, associate investigator of the study and Associate Dean for Clinical Research at UNR Med. “As a participant of this study, not only are you helping us to better understand the disease and the chronic health affects it has long term, but it’s a way to help those suffering from the disease to fight it and hopefully recover. We encourage participation in this important study and invaluable contributions to advancing medicine and our knowledge of COVID-19.”

This community-wide study led by physician researchers from Renown Health and UNR Med is a collaborative effort with Vitalant, county and state health districts, Saint Mary’s Medical Center, Northern Nevada Medical Center, Carson Tahoe Health and the VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System, along with the many care providers in our area.



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People aged 18-60 in general good health who have fully recovered from COVID-19 for at least two weeks are encouraged to consider donating convalescent plasma as part of this study. There are 332 people, just in Washoe County (as of 5/1/20) who have recovered from COVID-19 and have immune systems that may now be producing antibodies to protect them from becoming infected again with coronavirus. Donated plasma is needed right now, for this clinical trial to determine definitively if this treatment works. Participating in this research study will also make it easier to donate plasma to the [Mayo Clinic convalescent plasma program](#) that Renown is a part of in hopes to find a treatment for COVID-19.

There is no cost to participate in this study and participation is voluntary. An individual's decision to participate will not affect their current or future relations with their health care provider(s), health district, or the community. Those who decide to participate are free to withdraw at any time.

Confirmed COVID-19 patients who have recovered from the virus and are interested in participating in the study are invited to contact the project coordinators at the Renown Research Office at (775) 982-3646, or via e-mail at covidplasmascreeing@renown.org, 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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About Renown Health

Renown Health is a locally governed and locally owned, not-for-profit integrated healthcare network serving northern Nevada, Lake Tahoe and northeast California. Renown is one of the region's largest private employers with a workforce of more than 7,000. It comprises three acute care hospitals, a rehabilitation hospital, the area's most comprehensive medical group and urgent care network, and the region's largest and only locally owned not-for-profit insurance company, Hometown Health. Renown has a long tradition and commitment to continually improve the care and the health of our community. For more information, visit renown.org.

About the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine

The University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine (UNR Med), Nevada's first medical school, is a community-based, research-intensive medical school with a statewide vision for a healthy Nevada. Established in 1969, UNR Med is improving the health and well-being of all Nevadans and their communities through excellence in student education, postgraduate training and clinical care, research with local, national and global impact and a culture of diversity and inclusion. For more information, visit med.unr.edu.

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