



The latest information from Mayo Clinic

April 10, 2020

As the world's most trusted leader in health care, Mayo Clinic is committed to providing a comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayo is bringing together its expertise in patient care, research and education to advance tests and treatments for patients. The information in this update includes current policies, but this is an ever-evolving situation. For the latest updates, go to the [Mayo Clinic News Network](#).

Mayo Clinic Laboratories launch antibody blood test

Mayo Clinic Laboratories launched a serologic blood test this week that can determine if a patient had been infected and recovered from COVID-19. The test detects the presence of antibodies specific to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Combined with molecular testing currently underway, this antibody testing will be a powerful tool in diagnosing COVID-19. Unlike the molecular testing, which detects the virus itself, the antibody testing can identify those who have been exposed to the virus and have developed an immune response.

This could allow for screening health care workers and others for immunity, making it possible to determine if staff are safe to return to work. It also could identify people who have become immune to the virus as potential "serum donors" for potential convalescent plasma treatment (described in the potential therapy story below). Antibody testing also will be an important tool to understand how COVID-19 has spread through the population and how the human body responds.

Mayo Clinic is currently able to process up to 6500 serologic tests per day and is working to make antibody testing available on a broader scale. However, if you have symptoms, the appropriate diagnostic test is still the molecular test, which looks for evidence of an active infection.

Mayo Clinic continues to advance molecular testing capabilities for COVID-19 detection. Laboratories in Arizona, Florida and Minnesota have performed more than 70,000 molecular diagnostic tests to date. Currently, Mayo performs more than 6,500 molecular tests daily. Capacity will continue to grow over the coming days and weeks as more testing platforms are added. Mayo is now performing testing for health care systems and providers in more than 46 states.

Mayo Clinic takes steps to respond to financial challenges of COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic represents one of the most challenging public health crises we will face in our generation. Of course, the essential steps our communities are taking in response to the pandemic also have significant financial consequences, and Mayo Clinic is not immune from this impact. The decision to proactively postpone elective patient care was the right one, but it eliminated the majority of our revenue at the same time we are making critical investments to develop and expand testing, conduct research to stop the pandemic and re-align facilities and care teams to treat COVID-19 patients.

Mayo Clinic is reaching deeply into our reserve funds that we are fortunate to have due to our strong financial performance over the last few years. We've also instituted a temporary hiring freeze, deferred market-based pay increases for consulting staff, released the supplemental and contract workforce, and are halting all construction and capital expenditures that can be stopped without compromising patient care. Mayo Clinic will also be applying for emergency relief under the terms of the CARES Act and related state relief funds.

Without further intervention, we will severely compromise our ability to fulfill our mission to serve our patients, develop cures and educate future health care professionals. Mayo Clinic was able to protect full pay and benefits for our employees through April 28, temporary furloughs of some staff and salary reductions will be required after that time. Mayo's executive team will be receiving the largest salary reductions. It is important to note Mayo Clinic is not changing its defined benefit pension program or health benefits. Staff will be receiving more information on how these decisions will impact them personally over the coming weeks.

Mayo Clinic is focused on getting back to full operations as soon as safely possible. The medical leadership across all of our sites is working diligently to find ways to have non-COVID-19 patients in need of our services return to our practice. This crisis will run its course, and Mayo Clinic will emerge in-tact, more nimble, more connected to our partners and communities, and ready to move forward to accomplish our mission.

Mayo Clinic to lead national study of potential therapy for COVID-19

On Friday, April 3, Mayo Clinic was named by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as the lead institution providing coordinated access to investigational convalescent plasma for hospitalized patients with severe or life-threatening COVID-19, or those at high risk of progression to severe or life-threatening disease. This national effort will collect plasma from donors who meet several criteria established by the FDA. The approach involves giving patients an infusion of antibody-rich plasma from people who have recovered from an infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

The plasma donor must have recovered from, and tested negative for, COVID-19 and be otherwise healthy. The patient is transfused with the donor's plasma, which contains antibodies that can attack the virus and may help patients recover more rapidly.

The treatment is based on the function of antibodies, proteins created by the immune system that combat invaders to the body in various ways. Some are capable of neutralizing a virus, while others work by mobilizing a range of other immune cells that fight off disease. It's not yet known by which mechanism COVID-19 antibodies might work, but the thinking is that an infusion of convalescent plasma may boost a generalized response, known as passive immunity, until a patient develops a strong, targeted ability to fight the virus.

All Mayo staff expected to wear masks

In the continuing effort to keep patients and staff safe, Mayo Clinic is now asking all staff who are at

Mayo locations, including those not involved in direct patient care, to wear masks. Patients and visitors also are encouraged to wear homemade or cloth masks, or others that they have personally obtained while at Mayo Clinic.

Earlier this week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its recommendation regarding masks in public settings. CDC guidance now includes wearing cloth masks in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. The CDC considers cloth masks an additional, voluntary public health measure.

Mayo Clinic is now accepting homemade sewn masks at select locations, including across the Mayo Clinic Health System. Mayo Clinic Community Engagement is partnering with Supply Chain Management and Linen Services at Mayo Clinic to ensure donations are collected and laundered prior to being distributed to staff. Once staff have them, they are responsible for laundering the mask regularly. Mayo Clinic is grateful to many in the community who have expressed interest in helping in this important way.

If you have questions about the appropriate masks for your work or community environment or would like to offer donations, please send an email message to communityengagement@mayo.edu with the subject line "Mask inquiry." For an example of a basic sewn cloth face covering pattern, see the [CDC's do-it-yourself sewn cloth face covering](#) handout.

For more information, see the CDC's [guidance on the wearing of masks](#).

What happens to your body when you have COVID-19?

If you show any sign of possible COVID-19 symptoms, call your local health care provider. Your provider or a nurse will direct you to the dedicated COVID-19 Nurse Line. If you meet testing criteria, you will be directed to one of the local testing locations. As this virus spreads rapidly, help Mayo minimize potential exposure to other patients by not coming into a clinic or hospital to be tested. You should call your local provider first to find out how to be evaluated.

Check the [CDC website](#) for additional updates on COVID-19. For all your COVID-19 coverage, go to the [Mayo Clinic News Network](#).

**COVID-19 Update is prepared by Mayo Clinic's Division of External Relations.
It will be published as needed.**