

# Banner Health urges former COVID-19 patients to donate plasma for current patients

**Banner Research provides Donation Coordinators to assist potential donors**



*Banner submitted photo: Pictured from left to right: Dr. Laura Stephens, Rosalina Valenzuela, Michael Sjoquist, Ari Edelman, Sarah Kingma, Mary Young, and Heilly Salinas, from the Banner University Medical Center - Tucson Blood Bank.*

PHOENIX (April 24, 2020) – With the need for "convalescent plasma" to treat critically ill COVID-19 patients ramping up as cases rise, Banner Research is providing donation coordinators in metro Phoenix, Tucson and Northern Colorado to help recovered COVID-19 patients get through the plasma donation process. The donation coordinators are equipped to assess qualifying criteria for potential donors, answer questions and explain how the donation process works.

*“ Our goal is to make it as easy as possible for the recovered COVID-19 patients to donate their valuable plasma. ”*

Banner Health is part of a nationwide expanded access program designed to recruit plasma donors and use the valuable blood component as part of the treatment protocol for COVID-19 patients. A single plasma donation can be used for multiple patients. Those who have completely recovered from COVID-19 may have immune-boosting antibodies in their blood called convalescent plasma, which could be used to treat critically ill COVID-19 patients.

This week, the [Banner – University Medical Center Tucson](#) Blood Bank received its first unit of convalescent plasma to treat a COVID-19 patient in the ICU. While this is still an investigational new drug, there is hope the product will provide some therapeutic benefit.

The Food and Drug Administration recently allowed the transfusion of convalescent plasma as an investigational treatment. It's currently the only antibody treatment available for COVID-19 patients.

"Our goal is to make it as easy as possible for the recovered COVID-19 patients to donate their valuable plasma," said Chad Jaeger, senior director of Operations with [Banner Research](#). "The more information and assistance we can provide to put our recovered patients at ease and get them qualified quickly, the better, and our Donation Coordinators are equipped to do just that."

Current eligibility criteria for plasma donation include:

- Prior diagnosis of COVID-19
- Fully recovered and symptom-free for at least 14 days, as determined by a medical provider
- At least age 17 years old and weighing at least 110 pounds
- In good health and feeling well

Recovered COVID-19 patients can register directly with [Vitalant](#) or [American Red Cross](#) blood donation centers. Former patients who believe they meet the donation criteria also may reach out to a Donation Coordinator for assistance. They are:

## **Metro Phoenix:**

Robert Flynn, clinical trial senior manager, Banner Research

Phone: (480) 412-6859 Email: [robert.flynn@bannerhealth.com](mailto:robert.flynn@bannerhealth.com)

## **Northern Colorado:**

Debbie Kroll, clinical research specialist, Banner Research

Phone: (970) 810-2280 Email: [debbie.kroll@bannerhealth.com](mailto:debbie.kroll@bannerhealth.com)

## **Tucson:**

Sara Knight, clinical trial senior manager, Banner Research

Phone: (520) 903-8248 Email: [sara.knight@bannerhealth.com](mailto:sara.knight@bannerhealth.com)

Headquartered in Arizona, Banner Health is one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country. The system owns and operates 28 acute-care hospitals, Banner Health Network, Banner – University Medicine, academic and employed physician groups, long-term care centers, outpatient surgery centers and an array of other services; including Banner Urgent Care, Banner Imaging, family clinics, home care and hospice services, pharmacies and a nursing registry. Banner Health is in six states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada and Wyoming. For more information, visit [bannerhealth.com](http://bannerhealth.com).

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 [Staff from Banner - University Medical Center Tucson Blood Bank](#)  
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<http://bannerhealth.mediaroom.com/covid19plasma>