Treatment for COVID-19

Disclaimer from the CDC: No specific treatments or drugs have been proved safe and/or effective for treating or preventing COVID-19 by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) at this time. Current treatments are focused on preventing infection and supportive care, like using ventilators.

Arriving at the Hospital

If you have a severe case of COVID-19 and need to be hospitalized, the medical staff will check for signs of the illness causing more serious problems. They may:

- Check oxygen levels in your blood with a pulse oximeter, or clip-on finger monitor.
- Listen to your lungs.
- Give you a chest X-ray or CT scan.

Possible Routes for Treatment in Severe Cases

Ventilators:

- This is used when you are struggling to breathe or get enough oxygen to your blood.
- The ventilator moves air in and out of your lungs.
- It may be fitted to you with a mask or helmet. You may need a breathing tube if the issue is more serious.

Corticosteroids

- These drugs are used to provide relief for inflamed, or swollen, areas of the body.
- The National Institute of Health (NIH) recommends using them only in severe cases, when the patient is using a ventilator.
- They could be given to you orally, or more likely through an IV, or tube.

Remdesivir:

- This is an antiviral treatment, in limited supply, given to you through an IV.
The NIH recommends using Remdesivir when the patient needs supplemental oxygen, but not a high flow of oxygen nor if the patient is using a ventilator.

Convalescent Plasma:
- This is blood from people who have recovered from COVID-19, and have the antibodies (what the body uses to fight off infections) to the virus in their blood.
- It is given to boost your ability to fight the virus, from becoming more sick, or developing worse issues.
- A needle connected to an IV (tube) will be put into a vein in your arm. The plasma bag will be attached to the tube and drip into your blood, taking about 1-2 hours. You will be closely watched after the procedure for any problems.

Antithrombotic Therapy:
- Some severe cases of COVID-19 have led to blood clotting. Antithrombotic drugs, or tablets, simply stop your blood from clotting.

Drugs and Treatments Still being tested

If you are a clinician, you can check out these resources of medications that are still being checked for effectiveness and safety, and what situations to use them:

- FDA Combating COVID-19 with Therapeutics, [https://www.fda.gov/media/136832/download](https://www.fda.gov/media/136832/download) and Medical Devices, [https://www.fda.gov/media/136702/download](https://www.fda.gov/media/136702/download).

[https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/ventilatorventilator-support](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/ventilatorventilator-support)
[https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/convalescent-plasma-therapy/about/pac-20486440](https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/convalescent-plasma-therapy/about/pac-20486440)
[https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/](https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/)
[https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-dexamethasone-and-covid-19#---text=Dexamethasone%20is%20a%20corticosteroid%20used%20for%20critically%20ill%20patients](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-dexamethasone-and-covid-19#---text=Dexamethasone%20is%20a%20corticosteroid%20used%20for%20critically%20ill%20patients)