

# **New Treatment Available for High-Risk COVID-19 Patients**

by Colleen Reynolds

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ALTON – In an effort to prevent COVID-19 hospital admissions, OSF HealthCare is now offering a cutting edge monoclonal immunotherapy infusion. Bamlanivimab, or BAM, is approved for high-risk adult and pediatric COVID-19 positive patients with mild to moderate symptoms. The laboratory-made antibody mimics a naturally occurring one, which is known to fight off the virus that causes COVID-19.

The Eli Lilly drug received an emergency use authorization (EUA) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) last month. Now the drug is being administered in specially designated outpatient infusion sites throughout the OSF HealthCare Ministry.

Patients who qualify for BAM have been found to be at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness, and might need hospitalization if untreated. BAM is most effective when given early, and needs to be administered within 10 days of the onset of symptoms. BAM is not intended for routine use in the management of COVID-19, and is not approved for hospitalized COVID-19 patients.

“The categories that the EUA has selected are the patients that we have seen historically over the last eight months have a higher risk of having a bad outcome from COVID,” explained Brian Curtis, M.D., vice president, clinical specialty services, OSF HealthCare.

“Other diseases aren’t going away because COVID is here,” added Mark Meeker, D.O., vice president of physician services, OSF HealthCare. “People still need surgeries. They need screenings. They get sick with other diseases, so we need capacity to take care of them. I am really hopeful that this antibody indeed lowers the progression of disease in this high risk population so we can keep our hospitals out of full capacity.”

Qualifying patients need to be at least 12 years old and weigh 88 pounds. Adult patients must be 65 or older or have one of the following risk factors:

- Body mass index (BMI) greater than 35
- Chronic kidney disease
- Diabetes
- Immunosuppressive disease
- Immunosuppressive treatment

Patients 55 and older with heart disease, lung disease or who are undergoing immunosuppressive treatment also qualify for BAM. The qualifications for pediatric COVID-19 patients age 12-17 include:

- Body mass index (BMI) above the 85th percentile for age
- Sickle cell disease
- Cardiovascular disease
- Neurodevelopmental disease

· Use of a medical dependent device

If you are COVID-19 positive and want to know if BAM is available to you, contact your primary care physician. A digital version of this release, including downloadable interview clips and photos is available on the OSF HealthCare Newsroom [here](#).

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