

# The Role of Monoclonal Antibodies in Viral Disease Protection

As viruses continue to evolve, Americans need more tools to protect against serious illness. Innovations like monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) offer an important layer of protection that complements other preventive measures.

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## What are monoclonal antibodies and how do they work?

Monoclonal antibodies are microscopic defense proteins designed to mimic the immune system's natural ability to fight harmful pathogens and diseases.<sup>1</sup> They work to recognize and attach to specific proteins on viral disease cells. By binding to these targets, they can block infection before it causes illness.<sup>2</sup>

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## How are monoclonal antibodies different from vaccines?

Both are forms of immunization or protection against viral disease. Vaccines, a form of active immunity, teach your immune system to defend itself against a disease over time.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, mAbs are a form of passive immunity that deliver immediate, ready-made protection.<sup>4</sup> Each offers a different approach to prevention and can be used together for multiple layers of virus protection.<sup>5</sup>

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## Who can benefit from monoclonal antibody treatment and immunization?

More individuals than ever before can benefit from rapid, reliable protection against serious viral illnesses. mAbs may be particularly beneficial for people at higher risk of serious illness, including older adults, immunocompromised individuals, and those with certain chronic health conditions. They may also be an option for individuals who may not want or be able to take a traditional vaccine or treatment.

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## Are monoclonal antibodies safe?

Monoclonal antibodies are trusted by clinicians worldwide<sup>6</sup> and have been used effectively for over 50 years to treat diseases like cancer, autoimmune conditions and, more recently, COVID-19. Ongoing innovation with mAb technologies is expanding applications to additional forms of viral disease treatment and prevention. As with any medical treatment, patients should discuss potential benefits and risks with their healthcare provider.

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## How can I learn if monoclonal antibodies are right for me or a loved one?

The best way to determine if mAbs are right for you or a loved one is to talk with a healthcare provider who can offer guidance based on individual health needs and medical history.

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## Where can I receive a preventive treatment with mAbs?

Speak with your healthcare provider about mAbs as a preventive option for you and your family. Currently, mAbs are not widely available for viral disease prevention. To expand access, policymakers and regulators must update regulatory pathways, making it easier for more Americans to benefit from mAbs.

# Learn more about the power of mAbs and our work to expand access.

[ANTIBODYALLIANCE.ORG](https://antibodyalliance.org)



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3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Explaining How Vaccines Work. 2026. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/basics/explaining-how-vaccines-work.html>.

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5 CDC. Underlying Conditions and the Higher Risk for Severe COVID-19. COVID-19. Published February 6, 2025. <https://www.cdc.gov/covid/hcp/clinical-care/underlying-conditions.html>

6 National Cancer Institute (U.S.). Monoclonal Antibodies (<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/types/immunotherapy/monoclonal-antibodies>).