



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY



Alberta Health
Services

Q & A

Alberta Hope COVID-19 Trial

What will the clinical trial involve?

This will be a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial aimed at 1600 Albertans with COVID-19 who are at risk of deteriorating and developing severe illness.

Those who are eligible will participate in a five-day at-home treatment. To participate, you must be able to begin the trial within 96 hours of confirmation of a positive COVID-19 result, and within 12 days of symptom onset.

How do I participate?

Staff from Alberta Health Services will obtain permission from individuals with positive COVID-19 tests to provide their contact information to the researchers. Interested participants who provide consent will then be screened for safety and eligibility using a telephone interview and review of their electronic health record. The treatment will then be delivered to their door, anywhere in Alberta. Receipt of the treatment will be witnessed by a courier and confirmed by phone. Participants will then be followed up with by phone on day seven and day 30 of starting the study treatment.

Additional information can be found at: hopecovid.ca and [Be the Cure](#)

Why choose this drug?

HCQ is a well-known and safe drug. Originally used as an antimalarial, it is now primarily used as an immune modulator in the treatment of conditions such as inflammatory arthritis and systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). It was used during the SARS epidemic in 2003 but never tested in randomized trials. It has shown evidence of antiviral activity in the laboratory against corona viruses including SARS-Cov2. There have been small studies that suggest a treatment effect is possible. We now urgently need to know in a larger study if it is effective. There are known side effects with HCQ but most are related to long term use and screening can reduce the chance of including people with a significant chance of a severe risk with short term use.

If HCQ is well-tolerated and promising as a treatment why not just give it to everyone?

There are known potential side effects of HCQ that must be managed and well considered.

Who is the trial aimed at?

We will be enrolling Albertans who are at home with proven COVID-19 tests, are showing symptoms of the virus, and are at risk of developing severe COVID-19. They must be at least age 18 and have an underlying medical condition known to be associated with severe disease, or to be taking medications known to be associated with more frequent or more severe viral infections, or to be age 40 and over, - when the risk of more severe disease starts to increase.

What if I require hospitalization during my participation in the study?

Continuation in the research study will be at the discretion of the attending physician at the time of admission to hospital.

What about children? Why limit eligibility to those over 18?

With COVID-19 research so far fewer than one per cent of confirmed cases are in children under nine years of age while only 1.2 per cent were between the ages of 10 and 19. Severe cases of disease are reported in children but appear to be rare.

Why is Alberta so well suited for this study? How will this research help us all Canadians?

Alberta has a single publicly funded health-care system with processes and administrative data that will allow complete capture of health system encounters and resource utilization.

Will the study represent Albertans who may not speak English?

We will use every effort to identify research coordinators and physicians who can communicate with patients in their own language. We will also utilize a telephone translation system. Fortunately, we will have access to a large group of research coordinators across the province who speak several different languages.

Why is this study so important?

Not only would an effective early treatment have the potential to prevent severe disease and thus be of benefit to people who become infected with COVID-19, it could also reduce the need for hospitalization and need for critical care reducing the burden on an already taxed health-care system. We are also critically aware that we may have a resurgence of COVID-19. Other corona viruses may similarly arise. Finding possible treatments will remain highly relevant.