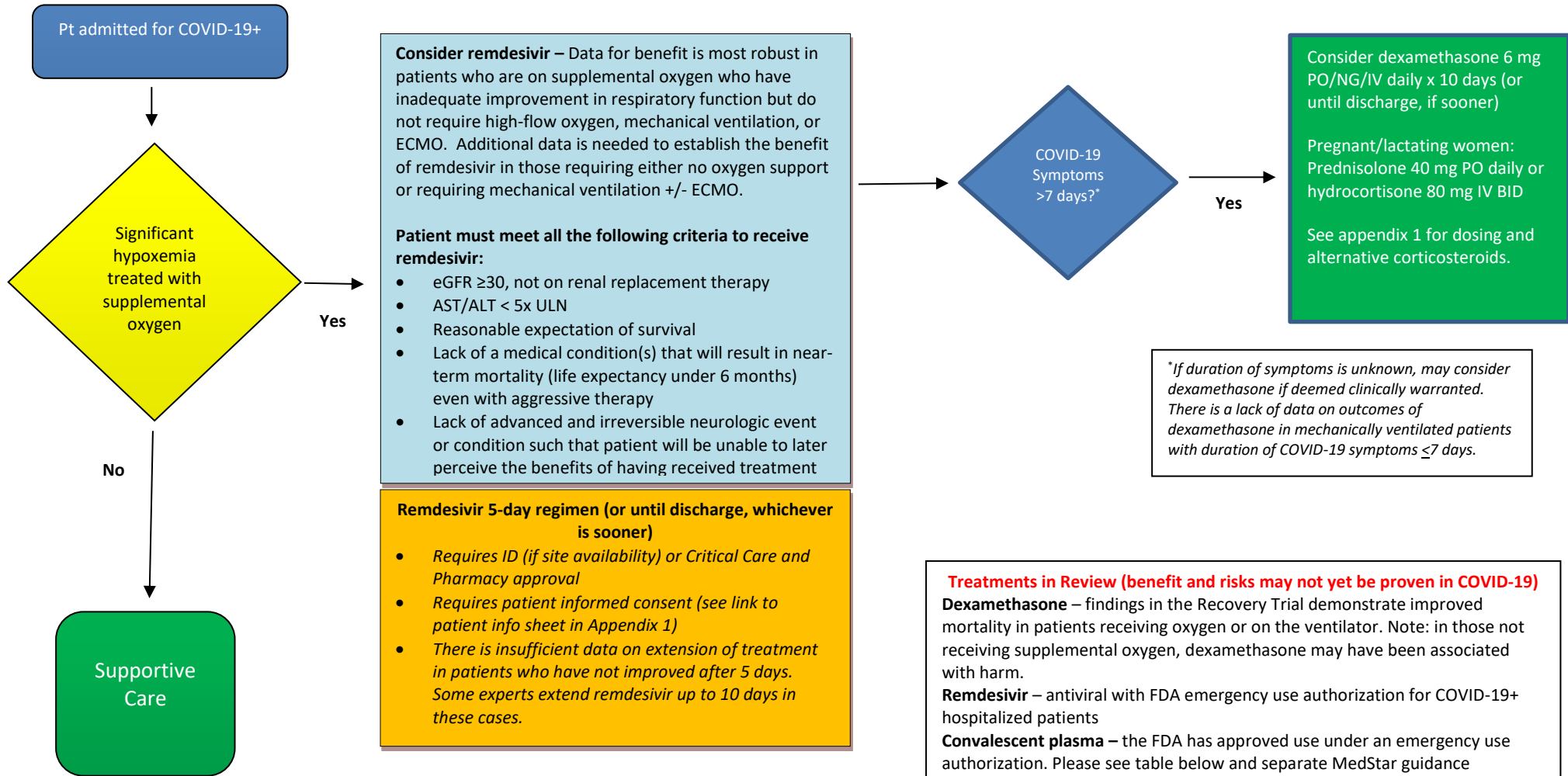


## Treatment Guidance for Covid-19 Infections (therapeutic options are not mandatory, evidence is evolving)



*\*If duration of symptoms is unknown, may consider dexamethasone if deemed clinically warranted. There is a lack of data on outcomes of dexamethasone in mechanically ventilated patients with duration of COVID-19 symptoms ≤7 days.*

**Treatments in Review (benefit and risks may not yet be proven in COVID-19)**  
**Dexamethasone** – findings in the Recovery Trial demonstrate improved mortality in patients receiving oxygen or on the ventilator. Note: in those not receiving supplemental oxygen, dexamethasone may have been associated with harm.  
**Remdesivir** – antiviral with FDA emergency use authorization for COVID-19+ hospitalized patients  
**Convalescent plasma** – the FDA has approved use under an emergency use authorization. Please see table below and separate MedStar guidance resources for additional information.  
**Tocilizumab** – the COVACTA trial demonstrated no clinical or mortality improvement in patients with severe COVID-19 pneumonia. Additional trials are in progress. Consider use only within a clinical trial.

- Appendices:**
1. Brief overview of agents
  2. ACE/ARB guidance (recommend continue therapy)
  3. Agents with limited data for Covid-19
  4. References

**Appendix 1: Brief overview of agents**

Current literature is evolving, and no medication therapies have conclusively demonstrated improved outcomes in Covid-19 patients. For an up-to-date literature evaluation of therapies, click [here](#). For all COVID-19 clinical trials in progress, click [here](#). If, on a case by case basis, a clinical decision is made to utilize a therapy outside of a clinical trial, select dosing regimens used in COVID-19 are listed below.

Agent	Dosing / Administration	Safety	Notes
<p><b>Remdesivir</b></p> <p>MOA: RNA dependent RNA polymerase inhibitor</p>	<p>Adults and children <math>\geq 40</math> kg: 200 mg IV x 1 dose, then 100 mg IV daily</p> <p>Children between 3.5 kg and <math>&lt; 40</math> kg: 5 mg/kg IV x 1 dose, then 2.5 mg/kg IV q24h</p> <p>Infuse dose over 30-120 minutes</p>	<p>Nausea, vomiting, elevated aminotransferase, headache, constipation, phlebitis, pain in extremity</p> <p>Avoid in patients with ALT <math>\geq 5</math> x upper limit of normal (ULN)</p> <p>Avoid in patients with GFR <math>&lt; 30</math> mL/min. If eGFR falls below 30 during treatment with RDV, weight the potential risks and benefits of continuing therapy</p> <p>Discontinue if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ALT <math>&gt; 5</math> x ULN</li> <li>• ALT <math>\uparrow</math> with s/s liver inflammation or <math>\uparrow</math> conjugated Bili, alk phos, or INR</li> </ul> <p>Drug interactions are possible (not studied in humans yet). Remdesivir is a substrate for CYP2C8, CYP2D6, CYP3A4, OATP1B1, and P-gp transporters. It inhibits CYP3A4, OATP1B1, OATP1B3, BSEP, MRP4, and NTCP.</p>	<p>On 8/29, the FDA expanded the EUA to include all hospitalized suspected or positive COVID-19 patients. However, currently, evidence is insufficient to support use beyond the patients with an SPO<sub>2</sub><math>&gt; 94\%</math> not on oxygen or in those requiring mechanical ventilation +/- ECMO. If more robust data becomes available to support the use of remdesivir in these populations, the MedStar guidance will be updated to reflect this.</p> <p>Additional Resources (click to access):</p> <p><a href="#">NIH Remdesivir Guidance 7-24-20</a></p> <p><a href="#">Patient/Caregiver Fact Sheet for Remdesivir</a></p> <p><a href="#">Patient/Caregiver Fact Sheet for Remdesivir in Spanish</a></p> <p><a href="#">Provider Fact Sheet for Remdesivir</a></p> <p>Report any serious safety events via: <a href="#">FDA MedWatch Adverse Event Reporting - electronic</a></p> <p>Or <a href="#">FDA MedWatch Downloadable Form</a></p>

<p><b>Tocilizumab (Actemra®)</b></p> <p>MOA: Monoclonal antibody to IL6 receptor/ treats cytokine release syndrome</p>	<p>8 mg/kg (max 800 mg) IV x 1 dose, repeat in 12 hours if no improvement or worsened.</p> <p>See clinical trials (in the reference section) for additional dosing regimens and inclusion/exclusion criteria.</p>	<p>ALT elevations GI perforation, anemia, hepatitis, neutropenia, infusion reactions</p>	<p>Given the lack of benefit demonstrated in the COVACTA study, use should be limited to clinical trial only.</p> <p>Not antiviral</p> <p>Avoid in pregnancy/breast feeding</p> <p>Baseline T-SPOT, and inflammatory markers (e.g. CRP, Ferritin, ESR, fibrinogen, D-dimer) (do not delay therapy) and as needed based on clinical condition. IL-6 levels may be sent but should NOT guide decision to administer tocilizumab due to delay in result turn-around time.</p>
<p><b>Sarilumab (Kefzara®)</b></p> <p>MOA: Monoclonal antibody to IL6 receptor</p>	<p>Randomized to 200 mg, 400 mg, or placebo IV x1 dose</p>	<p>Neutropenia, elevated ALT, GI perforation, infusion reactions</p>	<p>NOTE: US study in mechanically ventilated patients halted due to lack of benefit and increased side effects. No positive data exists currently to support use outside of a clinical trial.</p>
<p><b>Convalescent plasma (cFFP)</b></p> <p>MOA: confers passive immunity by providing antibodies from previously exposed COVID-19 patients. This approach has been effective in treating other viral disease (eg, hepatitis A and B, mumps, polio, measles, SARS-CoV-1, et al). The antibodies inactivate the virus. Several case series suggest possibly shorter duration of illness without adverse effects.</p> <p>Based on use in other viral diseases, it is felt to be most effective when used earlier in the course of disease.</p>		<p>Risks include pathogen transmission, infusion reactions, transfusion-related acute lung injury (all rare).</p>	<p>On Aug 23, 2020, the U.S. FDA approved the use of COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma (CCP) under an Emergency Use Authorization (EAU) as passive immune therapy for the treatment of hospitalized patients with COVID-19. Limited data suggests that treatment early (&lt;3 days) in the course of disease (prior to intubation) would be expected to have more benefit. However, adequate and well-controlled randomized trials have not been performed. In addition, there is some evidence to suggest that CCP with higher antibody content may be more likely to be effective, at this time most of the available CCP does not have a quantitative antibody titer.</p> <p>Should clinicians decide to administer CCP, the following guidance is suggested:</p>

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CCP should be reserved for hospitalized patients who require supplemental oxygenation</li> <li>2. CCP should be dosed as one CCP unit (about 200 mL), with additional dosing based on the physician’s medical judgement (for example, response to CCP or weight-based dosing)</li> <li>3. Patients with impaired cardiac function/heart failure or ESRD may require a smaller volume or more prolonged transfusion times</li> </ol> <p>Refer to Starport for these additional documents: <b>Interim 90-day Guidance for Clinicians on the Use of COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma, Fact Sheet for Patients – CCP, and Fact Sheet for Providers – CCP – EUA interim guidance.</b></p> <p>Providers/residents are encouraged to provide patients who are being discharged after recovery with information about how to contact the Red Cross for the donation of convalescent plasma. Click <a href="#">here</a> to access the Red Cross information for convalescent plasma donation.</p>
<p><b>Dexamethasone and other corticosteroids</b></p> <p>Corticosteroids may help suppress the cytokine storm in COVID-19 ARDS.</p>	<p><b>Dexamethasone (based on the Recovery Trial)</b></p> <p>Adults (non-pregnant/lactating): 6 mg PO/NG/IV daily x 10 days (discontinue on discharge, if sooner)</p> <p>Children: 150 mcg/kg (as base) PO/NG/IV daily (max: 6 mg) (discontinue on discharge, if sooner)</p> <p>Pregnant/lactating women: Prednisolone 40 mg PO daily or hydrocortisone 80 mg IV BID should be used instead of dexamethasone.</p>	<p>Dexamethasone, methylprednisolone, and prednisone cross the placenta and are present in breast milk.</p> <p>Hydrocortisone sodium succinate is enzymatically inactivated in the placenta, thus limiting fetal exposure. Avoid formulations containing benzyl alcohol. Hydrocortisone is present in breast milk.</p> <p>According to Bae et al, the amount of prednisolone in breast milk is minimal and based on the half-life of cortisol,</p>	<p>The Recovery Trial demonstrated dexamethasone improved mortality in patients receiving oxygen or on the ventilator. 28-day mortality in patients receiving dexamethasone was 21.6% vs 24.6% in those receiving usual care. This reduction in mortality was seen in those with symptoms for more than 7 days. Those receiving mechanical ventilation had a 35% decrease in 28-day mortality and those receiving oxygen without mechanical ventilation had a 20% decrease. Note: no benefit was seen with dexamethasone in those not</p>

	<p><b>Alternative corticosteroids if dexamethasone is unavailable (note: these were not included in the Recovery Trial)</b></p> <p>Adults:  Prednisone 40 mg PO daily  Methylprednisolone 32 mg PO/IV daily (or in divided doses)  Hydrocortisone: clinical trials in COVID-19 included 50 mg IV q6h x 7 days or 200 mg/day continuous infusion, however, the optimal dose has not been established. The Recovery Trial used 80 mg IV BID in pregnant COVID-19 patients.</p> <p>Pediatric:  Consult appropriate references for dosing of alternative corticosteroids.</p>	<p>exposure to corticosteroids can be avoided by waiting 4 hours after the dose to breastfeed.</p> <p>All patients: monitor for hyperglycemia, hypertension, immunosuppression</p>	<p>receiving any respiratory support and dexamethasone may have been associated with harm in those patients.</p>
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**Transplant patients:** Consult the transplant service (nephrology or surgery) immediately. Do not make empiric adjustments to immunosuppression without guidance from these services. Sites without transplant services should contact the patient’s outpatient transplant provider immediately for guidance on immunosuppressant management.

**Appendix 2: ACE inhibitors (angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors) and ARBs (angiotensin-receptor blockers)**

- It is strongly recommended that patients on existing treatment **should be continued on their ACE inhibitor and ARB therapy**
- Currently, there is no scientific or clinical evidence that taking ACE inhibitors or ARBs increases the risk of acquiring COVID-19 or that use may increase the severity of illness for those acquiring the infections.
- Patients should NOT be started on an ACE inhibitor or an ARB in the setting of COVID-19 treatment.

**Appendix 3: Agents with limited data for COVID-19 therapy**

<p><b>Azithromycin (Zithromax®)</b></p>	<p>Azithromycin demonstrates some antiviral activity in vitro. Limited clinical experience in COVID-19 shows mixed results. Concerns have been raised regarding drug-drug interactions (especially QTc prolongation with hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine).  Note: a patient who has community acquired pneumonia (CAP) may be receiving azithromycin as part of a CAP regimen (e.g., with ceftriaxone).</p>
<p><b>Hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil®) Chloroquine phosphate (Aralen®)</b></p>	<p>While these agents demonstrate antiviral activity in vitro, they were not shown to be of benefit in treatment of COVID-19 in hospitalized patients and may increase the risk of QTc prolongation.</p>
<p><b>Lopinavir/ritonavir (Kaletra®)</b></p>	<p>Lopinavir inhibits the protease activity of coronavirus in SARS. Limited clinical experience in COVID-19 shows mixed results. Efficacy has not been definitively established and clinical trials are on-going. Due to risk of adverse events and drug-drug interactions, along with a lack of robust data in COVID-19 at present time, not currently recommended.</p>
<p><b>Darunavir/cobicistat (Prezcobix®)</b></p>	<p>Currently being evaluated in a clinical trial but no in vitro or in vivo data exist to support use at this time.</p>
<p><b>Oseltamivir (Tamiflu®)</b></p>	<p>SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, does not use neuraminidase as part of the viral replication cycle so oseltamivir is unlikely to be of therapeutic value, and supplies of the drug should be preserved for patients with</p>

	influenza.
<b>IVIG</b>	IVIG remains on critical national shortage. The benefit in patient with COVID-19 is unclear.
<b>Ribavirin</b>	Role unclear, doses required for optimal antiviral activity often exceed limit of patient tolerability. Risk of toxicity likely outweighs potential clinical benefit.
<b>Nitazoxanide</b>	Displays inhibitory activity against the virus in vitro however no clinical data in humans exists.
<b>IV Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) and thiamine</b>	Recent data shows these agents combined with hydrocortisone did not lead to more rapid resolution of septic shock compared to intravenous hydrocortisone alone. It is unclear if these agents have any impact on viral illnesses.

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