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University of Maryland seeks testers for nasal spray during cold and flu season

You can help test a nasal spray to prevent viral infections



Volunteer Ethan McCaslin administers a nasal-spray medicine as part of a University of Maryland School of Medicine clinical trial currently enrolling volunteers. (Courtesy University of Maryland School of Medicine)



By **KARL HILLE**

With only a snort a week, a new drug might keep patients safe from several viruses — and the University of Maryland is willing to pay more than \$1,000 for people willing to test it.

The nasal-spray medicine called INNA-051 may boost immune defenses, reducing illness from respiratory viruses and researchers at the university's School of Medicine have put out a call for testers.

“This study represents a new approach to reducing illness from respiratory infections,” said Professor of Medicine Dr. Justin Ortiz in a university press release. Ortiz is the respiratory illness specialist and principal investigator for the ongoing trial.

“Instead of targeting a single virus, INNA-051 strengthens the body's early immune defenses, which may help mitigate disease caused by multiple respiratory pathogens,” Ortiz said.

The drug is not a vaccine but a preventive drug meant to be taken weekly during cold and flu season, according to the [university website](#). It helps the natural sinus immune defenses clear viruses before they can gain a foothold.

The trial is being run by the Center for Vaccine Development and Global Health. Participants will be randomly assigned either the medicine or a placebo spray and will not know which dose they receive. The School of Medicine hopes to enroll 1,100 healthy adults ages 18 to 45 who are at higher risk of respiratory viruses due to exposure to children or to work involving frequent contact with others.

Volunteers can [sign up here](#), and other clinical trials run by the School of Medicine [can be found here](#). Compensation for participating is up to \$1,150.

In January, 37 Maryland residents died of COVID-19, and the month ended with 213 people in the hospital from COVID-19, influenza and respiratory Syncytial Virus, according to the [Maryland Department of Health](#).

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