



## Nasal spray to treat Covid-19 enters phase 2 trials

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University of Newcastle and Hunter Medical Research Institute researcher Nathan Bartlett led the study.

A nasal spray offering users protection from Covid-19 could soon be employed as another line of defence against the virus, as encouraging results from a preliminary trial of the solution trigger a second phase of studies.

The revolutionary spray could provide almost immediate protection against coronavirus and influenza by activating natural immunity in the nose and throat, where respiratory viruses enter the body. The treatment, which uses the compound INNA-051, is being researched by Hunter Medical Research Institute and University of Newcastle respiratory researchers, who are developing the treatment for Australian biotech company Ena Respiratory.

“We discovered that INNA-051 is very effective at priming the airways to more rapidly and effectively respond to a viral infection,” associate professor Nathan Bartlett, from the University of Newcastle and head of HMRI’s Viral Immunology and Respiratory Disease Group, said. “HMRI’s proof of concept data was instrumental in ensuring the treatment was ideally placed to be tested against the virus that causes Covid-19.”

Professor Bartlett began work with Ena Respiratory prior to the pandemic to target the primary entry site for viral respiratory infections, including flu and common colds.

Later pre-clinical studies found the treatment was also effective in treating Covid-19.

INNA-051 would work to complement a vaccine, particularly where inoculation is likely to be less effective such as the elderly, patients with chronic lung disease and the immunocompromised.

“As we continue to combat current and emerging Covid-19 variants, there is a significant need for convenient therapies that boost protection in at-risk populations,” Ena Respiratory chief Christophe Demaison said. “By stimulating the innate immune response, we hope to create an extra line of defence against Covid-19 and other respiratory viral infections.”

The company is pushing ahead with phase-two trials across several countries to begin in January.

**ELLIE DUDLEY, REPORTER**

Ellie Dudley is a journalist at The Australian. She has previously worked in business and economics journalism, focussing on the start-up and investment space. She graduated from The University of Sydney with a... [Read more](#)

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