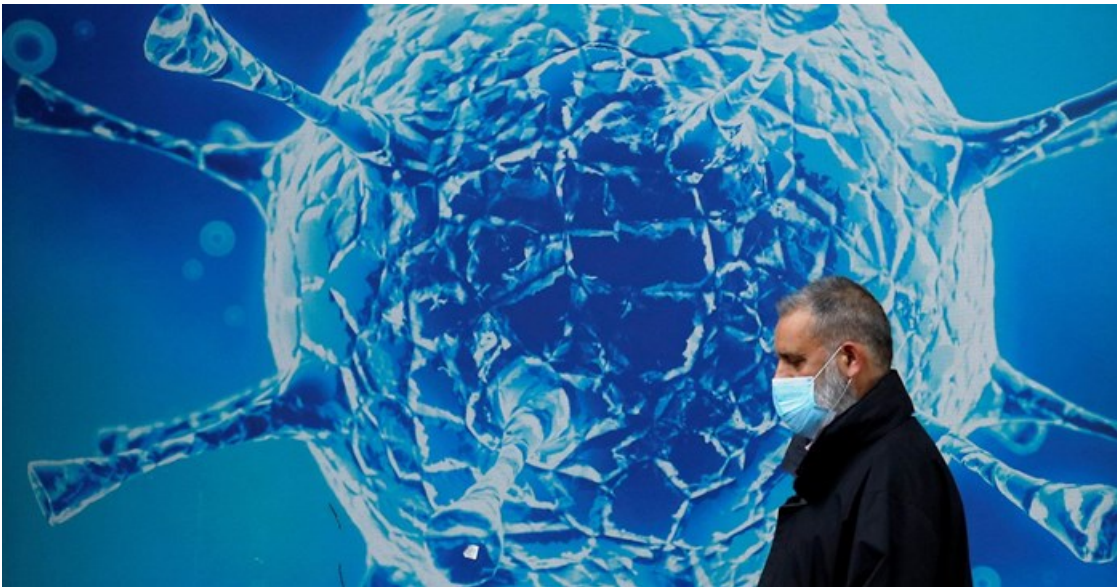


# Recovered Covid patients likely protected for at least six months, study finds

By [Kate Kelland](#)

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LONDON - Almost all people previously infected with Covid-19 have high levels of antibodies for at least six months that are likely to protect them from reinfection with the disease, results of a major UK study showed.



FILE PHOTO: A man wearing a protective face mask walks past an illustration of a virus outside a regional science centre amid the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) outbreak, in Oldham, Britain August 3, 2020. REUTERS/Phil Noble/File Photo

Scientists said the study, which measured levels of previous Covid-19 infection in populations across Britain, as well as how long antibodies persisted in those infected, should provide some reassurance that swift cases of reinfection will be rare.

"The vast majority of people retain detectable antibodies for at least six months after infection with the coronavirus," said Naomi Allen, a professor and chief scientist at the UK Biobank, where the study was carried out.

Among participants who had tested positive for previous Covid-19 infection, 99% retained antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 for three months, the results showed. After the full six months of follow-up in the study, 88% still had them.

"Although we cannot be certain how this relates to immunity, the results suggest that people may be protected against subsequent infection for at least six months following natural infection," Allen said.

She said the findings were also consistent with results of other studies in the United Kingdom and Iceland which found that antibodies to the coronavirus tended to persist for several months in those who have had the disease and recovered.

A study of UK healthcare workers published last month found that people who have had Covid-19 were likely to be protected for at least five months, but noted that those with antibodies may still be able to carry and spread the virus.

The UK Biobank study also found that the proportion of the UK population with Covid-19 antibodies - a measure known as seroprevalence - rose from 6.6% at the start of the study period in May/June 2020 to 8.8% by November/December 2020.

SARS-CoV-2 seroprevalence was most common in London, at 12.4%, and least common in Scotland at 5.5%, it found.

**Source:** Reuters

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