

Questions to ask

Here are some questions to ask before agreeing to take part in a clinical trial:

- Why is the study being done?
- How will it help me?
- What kinds of tests and treatments are part of the study?
- How am I protected?
- How could the study change what I do every day?
- What will happen to my cancer with or without this treatment?
- What other treatments could I get if I don't take part in the study?
- What are possible short- and long-term side effects for me and my family to think about?
- How do the risks and side effects of the standard treatment compare with the treatment being studied?
- How long will the study last?
- Will my insurance cover my being in this study?
- Will I have to stay in the hospital during the study? If so, how often and for how long?
- Will I have extra costs because of the study?
- How will I be checked after the study?
- How long do I have to make up my mind about joining this study?

Tip: Write out a list of your questions and concerns to ask your doctor.

More information

To find out more about clinical trials (research studies) in your area, ask your doctor or call
NCI's Cancer Information Service
1-800-4-CANCER
or visit the Web at
www.cancer.gov

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If You Have Cancer...

What You Should Know About Clinical Trials



National Institutes of Health
National Cancer Institute

What are clinical trials?



Cancer treatment clinical trials are research studies to find better ways to treat cancer. It is important that men and women of all ages and backgrounds take part in these studies so that what is learned will help cancer patients now and in the future.

Clinical trials often compare the most accepted cancer treatment (standard treatment) with a new treatment that doctors hope will be better.

Each study has rules about who can and cannot participate—such as age, sex, or type of cancer. Think about asking your doctor if you can take part in a study.

What kind of information will I get if I want to take part in a research study?

Before you join a study, a doctor, nurse, or another person on the research team will explain why the study is being done, and what will happen during the study. You can ask any questions you have about the study.

You will also be given a consent form to read. The consent form will explain:

- The exact plan for each step in the study
- What side effects you may have
- How the study may affect your daily life

You should ask questions about any part of the consent form you do not understand. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign the consent form.

Even if you sign the consent form, you can still change your mind and stop at any time.

Who makes sure my rights are protected?

Groups of experts at the national and local levels approve research studies before they begin. One of the most important groups is called an institutional review board (IRB).

The IRB's job is to review research studies and make sure they are run safely and fairly. All clinical trials should be reviewed by an IRB, which includes doctors, nurses, and people from the community.

What are some benefits of being part of a research study?

- If you join a study that compares treatments, you will get either:
 - The best accepted treatment for the kind of cancer you have (called standard treatment)
 - A new treatment that doctors hope will be better than the standard treatment
- What doctors learn in studies also helps people who may get cancer in the future.

What are some risks to being part of a research study?

- It is not known for sure if the new treatment in the study will help you more than the standard treatment for your cancer.
- Treatments in studies have side effects.
- Research studies have costs, and health insurance does not always pay for all your costs in a study. It's important to talk about these costs with a doctor, nurse, or social worker.

Do I have to take part in a clinical trial?

No. Taking part in a research study is up to you. It is important to look at all of your treatment options with the help of your family and doctor. This will help you decide if a study is the best way to treat your cancer.

You and your family should ask questions before you decide to take part in a research study. Be sure to get all the information you need before you decide if you want to take part.

