

Questions and Answers About Clinical Trials

What are clinical trials?

Clinical trials are research studies in which patients may volunteer to take part.

Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center uses clinical trials to find better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer. Doctors use treatment trials to learn more about how to treat cancer. This guide is for patients who may wish to join a treatment trial.

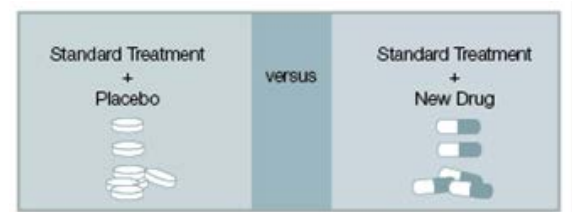
What are the *phases* of clinical trials?

A new treatment goes through several phases. Each phase has a different purpose. Most of the time, when you take part in a clinical trial, you will only be in that one phase of the study. New treatments move through the phases, but patients do not.

- Phase I trials test if a new treatment is safe and look for the best way to give the treatment. Doctors also look for signs that cancer responds to the new treatment.
- Phase II trials test if one type of cancer responds to the new treatment.
- Phase III trials test if a new treatment is better than a standard treatment.
- Phase IV trials find more information about long-term benefits and side effects.

Do cancer patients ever receive placebos in a clinical trial?

A placebo is something that looks like medicine, but is not. If a placebo is used, it is always given together with the best standard treatment. This allows doctors to compare standard treatment alone, to standard treatment with a new drug. Comparing a new medicine with a placebo can be the fastest and most reliable way to show if the new medicine works best.



Can I take part in a clinical trial?

Safety is key for taking part in a clinical trial. Each protocol has strict rules (also called eligibility criteria) that doctors must follow to decide who may join the clinical trial. This protects patients from getting treatment that may harm them.

Eligibility criteria include information about:

You and Your Overall Health

- Age and gender
- Results of medical tests
- Medicines that you are taking
- Any other health problems

Your Cancer

- Cancer type and stage
- Other treatments you may have had
- How long it has been since you were last treated

If you have found a clinical trial that you think you want to join, talk to your doctor to see if you are eligible to take part.

What are the benefits and risks of being in a clinical trial?

Each clinical trial has its own benefits and risks. You may benefit from joining a clinical trial in one of the following ways:

- If the new treatment works, you may be one of the first people to benefit.
- You may be able to help future cancer patients.
- The trial sponsor may pay for some of your medical care or tests. Ask your research nurse about who pays for these costs before you agree to join.

Some possible risks include:

- Side effects may be worse than those of the standard treatment.
- Side effects may occur that the doctor does not expect.
- New treatments do not always turn out to be better than, or as good as, standard treatment.
- As with standard treatment, the new treatment may not work for you even if it works for other patients.

Who pays for the clinical trial?

All trials are different. Your health insurance and the trial share the cost. Study sponsors pay for study drugs, devices, or products, as well as tests that are not included as part of standard treatment.

Where can I learn more?

Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center's Clinical Trials Page

<http://ww.baptistjax.com/patient-info/baptist-research-institute>

Find open Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center trials listed by type of cancer, treatment and study number.

Clinical Trials.gov is a database of privately and publicly funded clinical studies
<https://clinicaltrials.gov/>.

National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service

800-4-CANCER (800-422-6237)

<http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials>

Call the toll-free number or search the Web site for clinical trials.

Coalition of Cancer Cooperative Groups, Inc.

<http://www.cancertrialshelp.org>

Read about other patients who have taken part in clinical trials. Also, use the matching service to get a list of cancer clinical trials.