# Finding the Best Clinical Trial

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Clinical trials play an increasingly important role in the treatment of many cancers. They often provide the best treatment options and give you earlier access to cutting-edge therapies. But finding the best trial for your particular cancer is complex, so many cancer centers offer the services of a clinical research coordinator, also known as a clinical trial navigator.

### What does a clinical research coordinator do?

My team screens patients for applicable clinical trials. For progressive disease where initial treatments do not result in a cure, your treating team will reach out to our group to see if you may be eligible for a particular trial. It depends on eligibility criteria, diagnosis, how well you are functioning, tumor markers and other variables.

We'll prescreen you, and, if your oncologist agrees, present the trial to you. If you consent, we will move forward with screening and trial enrollment.

### What happens next?

We go over the basics, such as what is being studied, time and other commitments, and side effects. We make sure you are fully informed about what to expect, help with paperwork and, if everything checks out, go forward with enrollment.

### Do all cancer centers have these resources?

Not all. However, there are websites you can search to find trials that might be appropriate for you. One of the best is ClinicalTrials.gov. You can search by the type and location of your cancer and other important variables, and it gives contact information for the study managers to pass information along to your oncologist. An advocacy group for your specific type of cancer can also be very useful.

### What if the trial isn't available at my cancer center?

Your oncologist will likely keep track of research being done regionally. If their practice does not have a specific trial available to them, your doctor can refer you to a participating physician or clinic. In these situations, you usually remain a patient of your oncologist. You follow up with the

other site’s doctor for study-related visits only.

### What challenges do you face in your work?

These studies often require that the patient adhere to a visit schedule that is more intense than standard treatment. This can be a burden both in time and financial concerns. We work with the patient to minimize their time commitment. For example, if there is a scan coming up, we try to do it on the same day as a regular office visit. We work to limit the back-and-forth needed, especially if you live far away.

### What is the most inspiring part of your work?

How strong these patients and their families are always inspires me. They come in every visit. Instead of giving up, they continue the fight.

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http://beta.docker.cancerhealth.com/article/finding-best-clinical-trial-david-schwab