

Understanding Clinical Trials in Cancer Care

In cancer research, clinical trials find new ways to detect, treat and prevent cancer safely and effectively.

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Key Takeaways:

- Clinical trials are essential to discovering new and improved ways to detect, treat and prevent cancer. Every current cancer therapy exists because of them.
- All clinical trials follow strict scientific and ethical standards to protect participants' safety, privacy and well-being.
- By joining a clinical trial, you can access cutting-edge treatments, contribute to cancer research and help shape the future of cancer care.

Participating in a clinical trial helps advance future cancer care. In fact, you can thank clinical trials for all of the existing cancer-fighting options available today.

What Are Clinical Trials?

Clinical trials are well-designed research studies used to test a proposed theory. In cancer research, studies find new ways to detect, treat and prevent cancer safely and effectively. Clinical trials help researchers:

- Test new therapies to fight cancer
- Reduce treatment-related side effects
- Determine safe drug doses
- Test new combinations of drugs
- Confirm which lifestyle changes can reduce cancer risk

What are Some Types of Clinical Trials?

Clinical trials can cover new options for cancer prevention or treatment. They may include lifestyle factors such as nutrition and exercise. Some trials may use medicines or combinations of treatments.

Some clinical trials are for cancer screening and examine ways to find cancer at earlier stages when treatment is more likely to be successful. There are also supportive care trials, which look at ways to improve quality of life for people with cancer. This array of trials means you may be able to participate in one, whether you are interested in cancer prevention, treatment or post-cancer care.

Are Clinical Trials Safe?

Cancer clinical trials have many built-in safety measures and follow very strict scientific and ethical standards to protect your health, safety and privacy. Of course, they carry potential risks, as they involve new and unproven treatments.

Five facts about clinical trials

1. They can include all stages and types of cancer
2. People of all ages can participate
3. Enrollment can occur at any time after a cancer diagnosis
4. People without cancer can partake in studies for cancer screening or prevention
5. About seven percent of adults with cancer have taken part in a clinical trial

What Are the Pros and Cons?

Here are some pros and cons of being part of clinical trials.

Pros:

- The trial sponsor may cover cost of participation
- Your cancer care team can still be involved
- You can access new treatments that are unavailable outside of the trial
- You support cancer research

Cons:

- You may need to travel to the trial center

- There may be some costs for lodging, meals and travel expenses
- The trial may stop if safety issues arise
- You have no guarantee that a new treatment will be beneficial

How Can I Enroll in a Clinical Trial?

Talk with your cancer care team about enrolling in a cancer research trial. They can help identify trials that you may benefit from. Or, you can look for suitable clinical trials via the [National Cancer Institute](#) database or the [National Institutes of Health](#) database.

A study coordinator will pre-screen you to see if you meet the needs of study participants. They will provide you with in-depth information on the trial and guide you through the process. Before joining trial, it's important to know the risks, benefits, cost and time commitment.

Clinical research advances cancer care. Getting involved is a way to help others and offers hope for improved treatment options in the future.

Barbara Dean DMSc, PA-C, is a medical writer for AICR. She has her doctorate of medical science and clinically practices as a physician assistant in medical oncology. Barbara specializes in writing about cancer-related issues, including prevention and survivorship.

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