



CLINICAL TRIALS

Helping you make an informed choice

What Are Clinical Trials?

Clinical trials are research studies designed to answer scientific questions and discover better ways to prevent, diagnose, or treat various diseases and conditions. A clinical trial is one of the last stages of a long and careful process. Scientists begin by developing and testing new ideas in a laboratory. If a treatment seems promising, the next step may be testing it in animals to learn how it affects the disease in a living being and if it has harmful effects.

Treatments that work in a lab or in animals may not always work well in people. When a potential treatment seems safe enough to try in humans, it proceeds to be studied in a clinical trial. These trials are done with patients to learn whether promising treatments are safe and effective.

The most successful treatments today are based on what we have learned from clinical trials. As a result, people with various diseases are living longer and with a better quality of life.

Every treatment we have today was tested in a clinical trial to make sure it is safe and works well for people. Clinical research has led to the discovery of the disease treatments prescribed today.

What Are the Benefits and Risks?

Sometimes patients enroll in a clinical trial to get early access to what could be a promising therapy.

However, there are no guarantees that the therapy will work or that they will be assigned to the group of patients who get the therapy. Patients may be assigned to a comparison group instead that receives another approved treatment or placebo (a pill with no medication). The new treatment may also cause additional side effects. That is why a treatment may be offered in a trial where doctors can monitor patients very closely.

How is This Different from Getting Regular Treatment?

When your doctor needs to prescribe a treatment for you, they prescribe an approved treatment that is the standard of care for your disease or condition. If there is a clinical trial available for your condition, it may have two or more different treatments that you could be assigned to. One treatment will always be the standard treatment. The other treatment will usually be the standard treatment plus the new treatment. By the time a potential new treatment is available through a clinical trial, this means that doctors have a reasonable idea that it could be beneficial for patients with your condition now or as the future standard of care.

Being part of a clinical trial means you will never receive anything less than the standard treatment. You will just have the chance to get a potential new treatment in addition.

What About Costs?

The costs of any drugs or care are covered by your insurance or the clinical trial's sponsor. There can be some costs to you — such as transportation and childcare from any additional doctor's visits or tests. In many cases, there are ways of helping you with these costs.

Why Be Part of a Clinical Trial?

Participating in clinical trials at UI Health may not only benefit you but also could help future patients through the development of new, safer treatments. To make sure the FDA has a full picture of the risk or benefit of a medical product, patients enrolled in trials should be representative of patients who will likely to use the medical product in the future. Having diverse clinical trials helps the FDA understand how new medical products may help or affect groups of future patients, such as:

- People of color
- Underserved populations
- Older people
- Women

Is It Safe to Be in a Clinical Trial?

We understand you or your loved ones may be nervous about joining a clinical trial. However, we do everything in our power to protect the rights, safety, and welfare of all UI Health patients participating in clinical trials. Institutional Review Boards, independent of the people conducting the trial, carefully review plans for research involving patients before the research begins and at least once a year during the trial.

How Can I Be in a Trial?

Your doctor may already have a trial in mind and may ask you if you would like to participate. You also can ask your healthcare provider to find out if there are any clinical trials that may be right for you. You can look for clinical trials to participate in by visiting the National Library of Medicine's website at www.clinicaltrials.gov

Learn more about the clinical trials offered at UI Cancer Center!

UI Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office

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Clinical trials provide patients with access to new therapies that could become the future standard of care.



Additional Resources

Food & Drug Administration
www.fda.gov/forpatients/clinicaltrials

National Institutes of Health
www.clinicalresearchtrials.nih.gov