



# Med News Center

## What Is a Clinical Trial?

### **What is a clinical trial?**

Clinical trials are research studies that look at new ways to prevent, detect, or treat disease. They are the core of medical research. The U.S. National Institute of Health defines a clinical trial as a research study in which one or more human subjects are prospectively assigned to one or more interventions to evaluate the effects of those interventions on health-related biomedical or behavioral outcomes. The intervention may be a medication, a placebo, or another control treatment.

### **Are clinical trials safe?**

There are several safety mechanisms in place to ensure the safety of clinical trials. Most clinical trials in the US are approved and monitored by an independent committee called an Institutional Review Board (IRB). This group evaluates the study to ensure that the risks are minimal compared with the potential benefits of the study. Once the trial is approved by the IRB, the organizers of the study must follow a careful plan, called a protocol, that describes exactly what will happen during the study. Many trials are also monitored by a Data and Safety Monitoring Committee that is made up of experts in the disease/condition being studied who periodically look at the results as the study progresses. If they determine that the treatment is not working or is harming participants, they will stop the trial immediately.

### **Why it is important to participate in a clinical trial?**

In 1950 the average life expectancy in the United States was 68 years old. In 2022, the average life expectancy is 77 years. Most of the improvements in life expectancy and health have occurred because of medical research and the things that have been learned during clinical trials.

### **Who conducts a clinical trial?**

A clinical trial is led by a “principal investigator” who is usually a medical doctor. Clinical studies also have a research team that may include doctors, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, and other health care professionals.

### **Who pays for the clinical trial?**

The “sponsor” of the clinical trial usually pays for all research-related costs and any special testing. This includes supplying the new treatment, as well as any special testing, possible extra physician visits, and research costs involved in the clinical study. In the United States, most clinical trials are sponsored (paid for) by the federal government or the pharmaceutical industry.

### **Is there a charge to participate in a clinical trial? Will I be paid for participating?**

There is no charge for study-related medical care provided in a clinical trial. Study-related medical care may include study visits, medications, treatments, and procedures. In some trials, transportation and other costs may be provided.

### **Where can I learn more about Clinical Trials?**

ClinicalTrials.gov - A searchable registry and database of federally and privately supported clinical trials. <https://clinicaltrials.gov/>

National Institute of Health - Clinical Research Trials and You – a government website designed to help people understand the basics of clinical research.

<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/nih-clinical-research-trials-you>

MedNewsCenter.com – Clinical Trial Resources - Provides up-to-date patient and provider research resources. <https://mednewscenter.com/>