

6 Q&As ABOUT CLINICAL TRIALS

Help advance science and medicine by participating in a clinical trial.
Here's what you should know.



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What is a clinical trial?

A clinical trial is a study to determine if a drug, procedure, device or other “intervention” is safe and effective in preventing, detecting or treating a disease. An intervention may be a new or existing drug or combination of drugs, a new medical device or surgical procedure, or even changes in behavior that affect health.

Are clinical trials safe?

Clinical trials include a safety monitoring process, so a physician and the monitoring team review any changes in a participant’s health. Each clinical trial also has a “protocol” that includes details about who is eligible to participate and how participants are protected. Plus, most clinical trials in the United States are reviewed and monitored by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) that ensures participants’ safety is protected.



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Who participates in clinical trials?

Many people participate because they want to help others by helping to advance science and medicine. People with existing conditions participate for the same reason, but they also may get access to new treatments and extra care and monitoring. Each trial typically focuses on people with the same disease or in the same age group, for examples, although demographic diversity is also desired.

What are the benefits of participating?

Your participation helps others by advancing medical science and knowledge — and you might get a treatment that could help you. You will also be more active in your care, learn about possible resources, and you’ll get personalized care, medications and close monitoring by health care pros. You may also be paid for your time.



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What are the risks of participating?

New treatments and drugs may have side effects, so the research team keeps close tabs on each participant’s health. Frequent medical visits, procedures, travel, hotel or hospital stays plus time away from family and work can be a hassle.

How can you find a trial that’s right for you?

If you’re interested in joining a trial, ask your doctor if they know of one that would be a good option. Or go to [arthritis.org/science/clinical-trials](https://www.arthritis.org/science/clinical-trials) or to [clinicaltrials.gov](https://www.clinicaltrials.gov) and search for one that fits your condition and location. Before participating, get as much information as you can from the clinical trial recruiter and discuss it with your doctor before you make a decision.



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