

Quick Guide to Clinical Trials

Medical researchers use **clinical trials** to find and test new screenings, treatments, or procedures, and make sure that they are safe. Without clinical trials, we would not have the medical and scientific advances that we have today.

There is a great deal of confusion about clinical trials. This Quick Guide provides resources to dispel myths about clinical trials, to help you learn more about participating in a clinical trial, and to help you find clinical trials that might be available to you.

How Do I Find a Clinical Trial?

Work with your health care team to identify a clinical trial that might be a good fit for you. There are many resources available to help you find a clinical trial:

- National Cancer Institute: [Cancer.gov/About-Cancer/Treatment/Clinical-Trials/Search](https://cancer.gov/About-Cancer/Treatment/Clinical-Trials/Search)
- National Institutes of Health: [ClinicalTrials.gov](https://clinicaltrials.gov)
- To find other clinical trial databases and matching services: TriageCancer.org/Cancer-Clinical-Trials

How Do I Qualify for a Clinical Trial?

Just because you are eligible for a trial does not mean that you will be accepted. Some clinical trials only accept a certain number of people. Or, you may want to join in a trial that you are not eligible for because you have already had different treatments. In that case, you can ask your doctor to request a “special exception” to access the trial. But if approved, your results will not be included in the research study. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) also has an Expanded Access program that allows people access to drugs or devices that have not yet been approved by the FDA: www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/PublicHealthFocus/ExpandedAccessCompassionateUse/default.htm.

Will My Insurance Cover a Clinical Trial?

It is important to talk with your health care team and your insurance company to find out if your insurance covers a clinical trial and what out-of-pocket costs you might have to pay.

- The Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires most private insurance companies to cover the routine costs of your care when you participate in a clinical trial. Routine costs include office visits, blood tests, and imaging scans that you would receive if you were getting the standard of care. Insurance companies cannot drop your coverage or refuse to let you take part in the clinical trial.
- Insurance companies are not required to cover the research costs of the clinical trial, such as extra blood tests or imaging scans. Most clinical trials will cover those costs. Insurance companies are also not required to cover care that you receive from doctors or hospitals that are outside the insurance company’s network if your plan does not normally cover out-of-network providers. Some insurance companies will cover out-of-network providers, but at a lower rate, so you will have higher out-of-pocket costs.

- Some states may have laws that offer additional protections for you: [TriageCancer.org/State-Laws/Health-Insurance-Coverage-Navigation](https://www.triagecancer.org/State-Laws/Health-Insurance-Coverage-Navigation)
- Different rules apply for government programs such as Medicare, TRICARE, and VA plans: [Cancer.gov/About-Cancer/Treatment/Clinical-Trials/Paying/Federal-Programs](https://www.cancer.gov/About-Cancer/Treatment/Clinical-Trials/Paying/Federal-Programs)
- Since 1/1/22, Medicaid will cover routine patient costs associated with clinical trials. Medicaid cannot deny coverage based on the state where the clinical trial is conducted, or whether the provider is in-network for Medicaid. For details: [Medicaid.gov/Federal-Policy-Guidance/downloads/smd21005.pdf](https://www.medicaid.gov/Federal-Policy-Guidance/downloads/smd21005.pdf).

What Should I Do if My Insurance Company Says No?

For information on appealing an insurance company denial of coverage: [TriageCancer.org/Cancer-Finances-Appeals](https://www.triagecancer.org/Cancer-Finances-Appeals).

What Else Should I Think About When Participating in a Clinical Trial?

When deciding to participate in a clinical trial, you should also consider other factors that might impact your decision, such as:

- Where is the trial located?
- Will you have additional transportation expenses (ground/air, parking, tolls, lodging, etc.)?
- What is the time commitment?
- Will it impact your ability to work or care for your family (minor children, aging parents, etc.)?

Here are other questions to help you make a decision about whether or not to participate in a clinical trial: [Cancer.gov/About-Cancer/Treatment/Clinical-Trials/Questions](https://www.cancer.gov/About-Cancer/Treatment/Clinical-Trials/Questions).

Where Can I Get More Information About Clinical Trials?

- Triage Cancer: [TriageCancer.org/Clinical-Trials](https://www.triagecancer.org/Clinical-Trials)
- Animated Video: Triage Cancer Explains - How to Find & Pay For Clinical Trials: [TriageCancer.org/Video-ClinicalTrials](https://www.triagecancer.org/Video-ClinicalTrials)
- **ACT: About Clinical Trials:** The American Cancer Society (ACS) and Genentech have partnered together to provide information about participating in clinical trials. Triage Cancer participated in this series of videos providing useful information to help you understand clinical trials and make choices about what is best for you. Visit [TriageCancer.org/Clinical-Trials](https://www.triagecancer.org/Clinical-Trials), to find these videos:
 - Why Should I Consider a Cancer Clinical Trial?
 - How Will I Know if a Trial is Right for Me?
 - How Should I Prepare for Discussions With My Doctor?
 - What Standards Safeguard Trial Participants?
 - What Is Informed Consent?
 - Where Can I Turn for Information and Support?

