



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK

Together we will beat cancer

Understanding clinical trials for cancer



We know that people affected by cancer have a lot of questions. We can help you find reliable, clear and easy to understand answers.

In this leaflet you can find out about:

- what clinical trials are
- the benefits and drawbacks
- how to find out if there is a suitable trial for you.



Visit
www.cruk.org/trials
to find out more

What is a clinical trial?

Clinical trials are medical research studies involving people. They test new treatments for cancer and ways to reduce side effects or control symptoms. Trials also look at ways to improve prevention, screening and diagnosis of cancer.

Trials are the only reliable way to find out if a new treatment:

- is safe
- has side effects
- works better than the current treatment
- helps you feel better.

Your safety is very important. Your doctor and the research team will monitor your health closely throughout the trial.

What are the benefits?

- You may have a new treatment that is only available in a clinical trial.
- You may have more check-ups, tests and scans than usual, which you may find reassuring.
- You will be helping to improve cancer treatments for future patients.

What are the drawbacks?

- You may have to make more trips to hospital.
- The extra tests and check-ups could increase your worry about cancer.
- You may have to do some paperwork.
- You may have unexpected side effects from the new treatment.

How do I know if a clinical trial is safe?

The safety of people taking part in trials is very important. All trials are reviewed and closely monitored all the way through, from the ideas stage to the final results.

New treatments are carefully researched in a laboratory before they are tested with patients. But there is some risk with any new treatment, and no guarantee that it will be better than the standard treatment.

If you agree to join a trial, all the possible risks and benefits of taking part will be clearly explained to you. You can also withdraw from a trial at any point, and don't have to give a reason. You will then have the standard treatment for your type and stage of cancer.

How do I join a clinical trial?

Speak to your cancer specialist if you are interested in taking part in a clinical trial. You can also look at the clinical trials database on our website www.cruk.org/trials. It lists many clinical trials around the UK supported by both Cancer Research UK and others. You can print out information from the website and talk it over with your specialist. They can refer you to a doctor involved with the trial if you find one you think is suitable for you.

Different types of clinical trials


There are four main types or phases of clinical trials. One phase of the research is completed and the trial moves into the next phase. Each type of trial aims to find out something different about the new treatment or procedure. Some trials cover more than one phase.

Phase 1 trials are often small, and are the earliest tests of a new treatment. They aim to find out the safest dose to give and what the side effects are. People entering Phase 1 trials often have advanced cancer and have had all available standard treatments.

Phase 2 trials look at how well a treatment works for particular types of cancer. They also tell doctors more about the best drug dose to give, possible side effects and how to manage them.

Phase 3 trials test a new treatment against the best available current treatment (the standard treatment). They are much larger than Phase 1 or 2 trials. If a Phase 3 trial shows that a new treatment gives better results, it may become the new standard treatment. Many also include a 'quality of life' study to find out more about how treatment or illness affects you.

Phase 4 trials are for treatments that are already licensed. They aim to find out more about side effects, long term risks and benefits.



Our clinical trials database contains the details of hundreds of trials open in the UK.

What are randomised trials?

Many clinical trials are randomised. The people taking part are randomly assigned to different treatment groups – neither you nor your doctor can choose which group you are in. The mix of people in each group is similar in terms of age, gender or stage of cancer. This means the results are more reliable and not biased.

Cancer Research UK and clinical trials

Cancer Research UK currently supports hundreds of clinical trials testing treatments for cancer. This is part of our commitment to understanding cancer and ensuring that laboratory research moves on to clinical trials for patients to improve the lives of all those with cancer.

Keith Roxburgh

In 2012, I was diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer. I noticed I had more of an urge to go for a pee. But I delayed going to the doctor. In my heart I knew something was wrong, so I wasn't shocked to find I had cancer.

I was asked to go on the STAMPEDE trial, supported by Cancer Research UK. The trial compares using hormone therapy by itself, with using hormone therapy alongside other treatments.

For me, it's involved having a bone strengthening drug as well as a hormone drug. I was delighted to take part as, without research, we won't find the solutions we need to control this horrible disease.

“

I would love to think that, in the future, this trial could help hundreds, or even thousands, of others

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For more information

All our services are free and cover nearly 200 different types of cancer.



Visit www.cruk.org/about-cancer

Written specially for patients and their loved ones, covering all aspects of cancer.



Chat online

Share information and experiences with others living with cancer in our online community. www.cruk.org.uk/cancerchat



Ask the nurses

You can speak to our specialist nurses on freephone **0808 800 4040**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.



Find a clinical trial

Use our online clinical trials database to find out about clinical trials in your area. www.cruk.org/trials



Pop into our mobile unit

Visit the Cancer Awareness Roadshow for information and help with making healthy lifestyle choices.



Get involved

Learn more about cancer policy and research and use your own experience to help shape our work. www.cruk.org/get-involved

