Frequently Asked Questions about Clinical Research

What are the benefits of participating in a clinical trial?

- You may gain access to new drugs and other treatments, sometimes years before they are widely available.
- You will be monitored closely for any side effects.
- You will have the chance to take an active role in your own healthcare.
- You will be making a valuable contribution to cancer research.

What are the possible risks of participating in a clinical trial?

- A clinical trial can sometimes require more time and medical attention than normal care. This can include doctor visits, phone calls, more treatments, a hospital stay, or a more complicated treatment regimen. (Ask your doctor for information about the trial you are considering.)
- The treatment might not work.
- The treatment might cause serious side effects.
- Even if a new approach helps some patients, it might not help you

What are the chances I will get a placebo?

A placebo is a pill or other substance that has no therapeutic effect. Many people think that clinical trials involve placebos, but only a small fraction of cancer clinical trials use them. If a placebo is part of the trial you're considering, you will be fully informed of that fact ahead of time. You would only be considered for such a trial when it's safe and medically appropriate.

Do I have to pay to be in a clinical trial?

Patients generally do not have to pay extra out-of-pocket costs for treatments studied as part of a trial. Every trial is different, but the clinical trial's sponsor usually pays for all research-related costs and any special testing.

How do I know if I'm eligible to join a clinical trial?

All clinical trials have guidelines spelling out who can participate. These are called eligibility criteria. The factors that allow you to participate in a clinical trial can include age, gender, the type and stage of your disease, previous treatment history, and other medical conditions.

Following eligibility criteria helps us keep you safe and ensures that researchers learn the information they need.

What is informed consent?

Informed consent is the process of learning about the clinical trial before you decide to take part in it. The research team running the trial will explain the trial's purpose, how long it will take, what will happen, all potential risks and benefits, and information on the privacy of your medical records.

If you want to participate, you will sign a consent form that details all of the information that has been discussed with the research team. You will be able to take that form home and refer to it at any time. Even though you have signed the consent form, you still have the right to leave the study at any time and for any reason.

Informed consent continues throughout the trial. This will give the research team an opportunity to update you on the progress of the trial as well as any side effects or other risks that have been identified.