FACT SHEET

COLORECTAL CANCER CLINICAL TRIALS

What Are Clinical Trials?

Clinical trials are research studies aimed at making cancer treatments better so people can live longer or live with less negative side effects. To achieve this, researchers test new drugs, medical protocols, treatments, medical devices and other cancer-fighting tools to learn innovative ways to tackle a disease. Researchers and doctors involved in clinical trials follow strict guidelines and steps to protect participants and their information while studying the effectiveness and safety of new treatments and medical devices.

Without clinical trials, colorectal cancer therapies would not evolve to become better and more reliable. *All current therapies used today are a result of clinical trials!*

Clinical Trial Myth Buster

There are many myths about clinical trials. Let us help set the record straight.

Myth	Fact
If I join a clinical trial, I'll get a sugar pill.	No patient on a colorectal cancer clinical trial will receive less than standard of care. All patients on trials receive some treatment.
Clinical trials cost too much money.	Clinical trials are generally paid for by the sponsor of the trial. The standard of care treatments, like lab work, are often paid by your insurance. Ask your doctor if you should expect any additional out-of-pocket expenses.
Clinical trials are only my last option.They are only aimed at curing cancer.	There are many trials available to patients along the cancer continuum, not just those who have not responded to treatment. There are trials to help better understand treatment, but there are also trials that help with survivorship care, mental health, screening and other aspects of clinical care.
I'll be a guinea pig.	A tremendous amount of research has already been done on treatments used in clinical trials. Even before new drugs reach patients enrolled in trials, they go through a multi-phased rigorous laboratory process. You will receive excellent care when on a clinical trial, be monitored thoroughly, and will be treated with respect.

Some reasons people join clinical trials

- Get access to an experimental drug or treatment not available outside a clinical trial
- Have a chance to try a new treatment if others haven't worked
- Their participation will help future CRC patients
- Receive quality care from a medical team following a carefully-designed protocol based on the latest known evidence

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"Several months after diagnosis and initial treatment, my oncologist discussed a clinical trial. Until then, I didn't know a trial could be an option. A small phase I trial for CRC patients was recommended and I decided to go for it. The decision was totally mine. I wanted fewer side effects, my cancer was at a standstill, and I was willing to try." **- Karen Wehling, stage IV survivor**

Informed Consent and Stopping Trial Participation

Clinical trial participation is *voluntary*. Before joining, you must sign an *informed consent*, a detailed document containing all trial information. Make sure you talk to your doctor about any questions you have on this document. Once you join a trial, you can withdraw at any time if you choose.

Clinical Trial Eligibility

To join a clinical trial, you're required to meet the trial's eligibility based on specific criteria. For example, researchers may be recruiting patients of a certain age, with a tumor in a specific location, or patients with a certain genetic mutation.

What Makes a Clinical Trial Successful?

Clinical trials differ in how they measure success, but here are some common measures used:

- Overall survival: those on the new treatment live longer than those on standard of care
- Disease-free survival: length of time since the cancer disappeared
- Progression-free survival: how long after treatment starts before cancer grows
- Complete pathological response: all signs of cancer are gone after treatment ends
- Partial pathological response: there is a decreased sign of cancer after treatment

Are There Risks Associated with Clinical Trials?

Protecting clinical trial patients is the most important part of a trial. Researchers, their peers, Institutional Review Boards (IRBs), patient advocates, the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and others review trial procedures to ensure patient safety, but there are still risks. Here are some things to consider:

- New treatments aren't always better than the standard treatment available. In some situations, they may be less effective.
- While there have been many trials effective at treating cancers, there are no guarantees that this is true for all.
- There may be unexpected side effects, or side effects may be worse than the standard treatment.
- Patients in randomized clinical trials can't choose their treatment, nor can their doctors.
- Some costs of clinical trials may not be covered. Check with your doctors and insurance company to see what is covered.
- If the trial requires you to travel far, you may encounter logistical issues.

get started

To learn more about clinical trials or find tools to help you search, visit FightColorectalCancer.org/ClinicalTrials