



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK

UNDERSTANDING CLINICAL TRIALS FOR CANCER

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OUT
MORE



YOUR
CANCER
GUIDE

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 whether there is a suitable trial for you.

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



What is a clinical trial?

Medical research studies involving people are called clinical trials. Clinical trials in cancer test new treatments, ways to reduce side effects of treatment and to control symptoms. They may also investigate the causes of cancer and new ways of preventing, diagnosing or screening for 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?

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.

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.

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 all 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. If there is a trial that is suitable for you, your specialist will refer you to the doctor who is organising the trial.

Our clinical trials database contains the details of around 500 trials open in the UK.

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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.

would love to
think that, in the
re, this trial could
help hundreds,
even thousands,
of others'

Keith Roxburgh



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.

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. This ensures that the results of the trial are not biased for any reason as each group has a similar mix of patients, with different ages, sexes or states of health.

Cancer Research UK and clinical trials

Cancer Research UK currently supports more than 260 clinical trials testing new drugs and treatments for cancer. This is part of our commitment to understanding cancer and ensuring that laboratory research moves on to clinical research to improve the lives of all those with cancer.

More information

We provide easy to read information in plain English about cancer treatment and cancer care. Our trials database is written specifically for patients, is updated daily and includes trial results as well as trials that are ongoing.

Visit **www.cruk.org/trials**

If you want to talk in confidence about cancer, call our information nurses on freephone **0808 800 4040**.

This leaflet is based on information from the website of Cancer Research UK. You can order our full range of leaflets free online at **www.cruk.org/leaflets**

About Cancer Research UK

CRUK pioneers life-saving research to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured. From our volunteers and supporters to our scientists, doctors and nurses, we're all here to save more lives and prevent, control and cure all cancers. Sooner or later we will beat cancer, let's make it sooner. If you would like to support our work, please call **0300 123 1861** or visit our website **www.cruk.org**