

# Cancer Clinical Trials

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Clinical trials are important research in the world of cancer care. Clinical trials, and the patients who take part in them, have helped make cancer treatment better and safer. What we learn from clinical trials helps us develop better treatments in the future.

## **What is a clinical trial?**

Clinical trials look at new treatments or a group of existing treatments in people with cancer. Many of today's treatments are the result of what we learned from other clinical trials.

The treatments tested in a clinical trial may include:

- Medications
- Natural health products
- Devices
- Surgical techniques
- Educational interventions
- Behavioral therapies

During a clinical trial, information is gathered about:

- The side effects of treatment
- How safe the treatment is
- How well the treatment works against the cancer
- Whether or not the new treatment is better than the usual treatment for that type of cancer

Taking part in a clinical trial is voluntary. You can say no or stop taking part at any time. You will receive the same level of care if you are part of a clinical trial or not.

## **How are clinical trials developed?**

The search for better cancer treatments starts with research in the laboratory. Once treatments are found to be safe and effective, they can be offered to patients within a clinical trial.

## **How can I take part in a clinical trial?**

Clinical trials are not available for all types of cancer. Your oncologist or hematologist is aware of the clinical trials available for you and they will discuss these with you. Ask your doctor or nurse if there are clinical trials open and suitable for your cancer.

If you are eligible and you want to learn more about it, you will meet with a clinical trials nurse. Information will be given about the clinical trial and you will be able to ask questions. You will have time to think about your choices and discuss them with your family, friends and other doctors. A nurse will contact you regarding your decision. If you decide to join a clinical trial you will be asked to sign an approval form which gives details of the trial.

### **What are the benefits of a clinical trial?**

- All patients will receive the best care according to the current cancer care guidelines
- You are taking an active role in your care by looking at all the cancer care choices available to you, including clinical trials
- By being involved in a clinical trial, you are taking part in cancer research

### **Will I find out the results of the clinical trial?**

If there is a direct impact on your care during the trial, you will be told as soon as possible. When a clinical trial has finished, a period of time is needed to study the results. Sometimes, the trial will follow patients after the treatment is completed.

When a clinical trial is over, and the patients have been followed long enough, the results may be written in a medical journal or presented at meetings. This may take many years. Ask your doctor about the progress of your clinical trial. Your name and personal identifying details will not be published in medical journals.

### **Questions to ask**

- Is there a clinical trial for my cancer?
- What kind of care will I get if I do not participate in a clinical trial?
- How much time is required to participate in a clinical trial?
- Will I need additional tests?
- Can I receive my therapy in my home hospital?
- Can I choose which therapy I receive?
- What happens if I go on the study and I get side effects or don't want to continue?
- Are there any risks related to being a part of the clinical trial?
- Are there extra costs to me?

To find the cancer clinical trials available in Nova Scotia go to:

› <https://www.novastudiesconnect.com/>

**Patient and family feedback is very important to us.**

**We would like to invite you to send any comments or suggestions on how to improve this booklet to [education.cancercare@nshealth.ca](mailto:education.cancercare@nshealth.ca) or feel free to call us at 1-866-599-2267.**

**Looking for more health information?**

Find this brochure and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/cancer>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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*If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider*