

Clinical Trials



These studies help doctors and researchers learn better ways of preventing, finding, treating, and curing diseases.

What are clinical trials?

Clinical trials are carefully designed research studies that include people like you. By volunteering to be in a clinical trial, you can help doctors and researchers better understand diseases and potential cures.

Clinical trials help find:

- Ways to prevent diseases
- Ways to detect diseases
- Cures for diseases
- Better treatments with fewer side effects
- Ways to support long-term health and quality of life

Types of clinical trials

There are many types of clinical trials. Two of the main types at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital are therapeutic and non-therapeutic trials.

Therapeutic clinical trials test treatments in people with certain diseases. Clinical trials often use experimental treatments. An experimental treatment has not been fully tested and is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration. It is not part of standard medical care.

Non-therapeutic clinical trials do not offer treatments. Instead, they collect information to help us learn more about the disease or its effects. A non-therapeutic trial may not offer a medical benefit to the patient. But what scientists learn may help other patients in the future.

What do clinical trials study?

Did you know? Most treatments today were once part of clinical trials. These trials can study, for example:

- New medicines
- New ways to use existing medicines for a different disease or group of patients
- Different medicine doses or schedule
- How to make other therapies more effective
- Different combinations of treatments
- New methods, devices, or equipment

Clinical trials versus standard medical care

Clinical trials are different from standard medical care. Therapeutic clinical trials seek to improve treatments. Researchers must follow a specific research plan or protocol during a clinical trial.

Clinical trials

- Treatment is experimental
- Treatment follows the research plan
- Treatment benefits are not fully known
- Side effects are not fully known
- Patients may get standard care and experimental treatment or experimental treatment only

Standard medical care

- Treatment has been tested
- Treatment based on individual patient's needs
- Treatment benefits are known
- Side effects of the treatment are known
- Patient only gets standard care

Safety in clinical trials

Clinical trials have many steps to ensure safety. A review board made up of independent experts must review and approve every clinical trial and any changes made to the trial, based on what is learned.

The review board:

- Monitors the study as it happens
- Makes sure the study is ethical
- Makes sure risks are reasonable compared to potential benefits

How to take part in clinical research

If you are interested in taking part in clinical research, your first step is to meet with someone from the clinical research team. They will explain the study before you decide.

Websites: <https://together.stjude.org> or <https://www.stjude.org/care-treatment>