

# Clinical trials

## What you need to know

PAN  
Foundation



Have you ever considered a clinical trial for you or a loved one but was not sure where to start? **We know clinical trials may seem complicated, but the PAN Foundation is here to simplify and explain what you need to know.**



## What should I know first?

### What are clinical trials?

In clinical trials, people volunteer to help the medical community learn more about health conditions. When you join a clinical trial, you help explore potential new medical treatments or ways to prevent health problems.

### Why do people volunteer for clinical trials?

People join clinical trials for different reasons. Here are some reasons why people decide to join:

- Help healthcare professionals and researchers find out if a potential treatment works.
- Get extra care and attention from healthcare providers.
- Learn more about your illness or health condition.
- Play an active role in your healthcare.
- Help make medical research better for future patients.



## Are clinical trials safe?

Safety is the most important thing in clinical trials. Before anyone joins, experts make sure the trial is as safe as possible. And while the trial is happening, there are rules and groups that keep checking to make sure everyone stays safe.

## Are there any risks of joining a clinical trial?

Even though clinical trials are designed to be safe, there are some risks to be aware of:

- **Side effects:** Some people might have unexpected reactions to the potential new treatment, which can vary based on their health and how their body responds. These could range from mild annoyances to more serious problems.
- **Uncertain results:** Because clinical trials test potential new treatments, we can't be sure how well they will work. The treatment might not be effective or could be less helpful than current options.

If you experience side effects, the trial team is there to help. They will closely monitor your health, provide treatment if needed, and make sure you're comfortable throughout the trial. Make sure to talk with your healthcare provider about any concerns and ask questions before participating.

## Does it cost anything to join a clinical trial?

You will not have to pay for visits with the trial team. Tests and procedures required as part of the trial will be provided at no cost to you. But there may be other costs that make it difficult for you to participate including transportation costs or lost wages. You can ask the trial team about these concerns. Most trials will also reimburse you for certain expenses related to your visits.

## Can I leave a clinical trial if I don't like it?

Yes, you can leave a clinical trial anytime, for any reason. Just let the trial team know, and they'll help you with the process. They are there to support you and make sure your health comes first.



## Why is representation in clinical trials important?

Clinical trials that include different types of people lead to treatments and vaccines that are safer and more effective.

For example, if only one type of person tried a medicine, we wouldn't know if it works the same for others. Including a mix of people from different groups helps make sure treatments are safe and effective for everyone.



## How do clinical trials work?

### What are the different types of clinical trials?

There are many types of clinical trials. Sometimes, a trial can be a combination of more than one type.

- **Potential treatment trials:** Test new medicine, surgeries, or other potential treatments.
- **Prevention trials:** Discover ways to stop diseases from happening.
- **Screening trials:** Develop ways to detect diseases earlier.
- **Diagnostic trials:** Find better ways to diagnose diseases.
- **Device trials:** Test new medical devices to see if they are safe and effective.
- **Behavioral trials:** Study ways to change behaviors that affect health.
- **Quality of life trials:** Explore ways to improve life for people with long-term health problems.



## What are the phases of clinical trials?

Clinical trials happen in steps, called phases. Each phase has a different goal. If you join a clinical trial, you would only be part of one phase at a time.

Here's what each phase does:

- **Phase 1:** Tests a new treatment on a small group of people to see if it's safe and to find the right dose.
- **Phase 2:** Tries the treatment on a bigger group to see if it works and to keep checking if it's safe.
- **Phase 3:** Involves an even larger group to compare the new treatment with what's already available and confirm it works.
- **Phase 4:** Happens after the treatment is approved to keep track of how it works for more people.

## What does randomization mean in clinical trials?

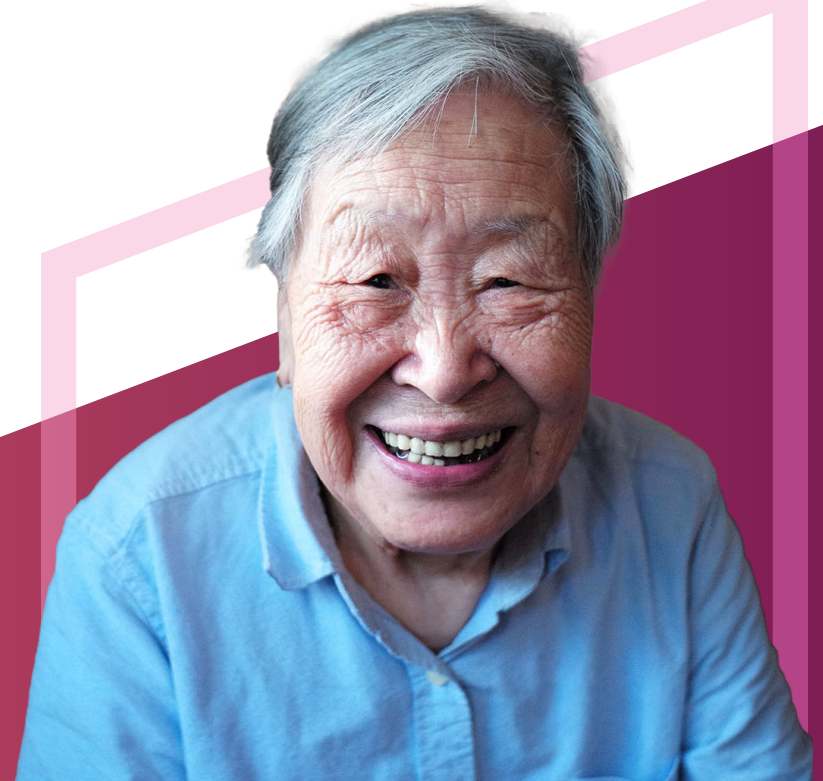
In clinical trials, people are put into different groups by chance. A computer randomly decides which group you'll be in.

You don't get to pick, and the trial team doesn't pick either. This process, called randomization, makes sure that the results are fair for everyone.

## What is a placebo?

A placebo can be a medicine or procedure. But it has no true physical effects. Using a placebo can help identify the effects of a potential medicine or procedure by comparing the effects of someone who is taking a placebo with someone who has been given a potential new treatment or procedure.

Not all trials include a placebo. Before you join a trial, you will know if there's a chance you might get a placebo. No matter if you get the potential treatment or the placebo, you'll receive attention from healthcare providers during the trial.



# How can I get involved?

## Where can I search for available clinical trials?

PAN has a clinical trial tool that you can use at [trialfinder.panfoundation.org](https://www.trialfinder.panfoundation.org). You can search for trials in your area and sign up for notifications when a new trial becomes available nearby.

Whether you're using our trial finder tool or [clinicaltrials.gov](https://www.clinicaltrials.gov), contact information will be listed for those who are interested in the trial.

## Should I talk to my healthcare provider about clinical trials?

Talking to your healthcare provider is an essential step if you're thinking about joining a clinical trial.

Here are some tips on how to bring it up:

- **Ask about options:** You can start by asking, ***“Are there any clinical trials that might be right for me?”*** Your healthcare provider can help you understand what trials might be a good fit.
- **Consider your current treatment plan:** Ask your healthcare provider how the trial could change your routine and what you should expect during the trial.
- **Know your rights:** Remember, joining a clinical trial is your choice. You have the right to ask as many questions as you need to feel comfortable before deciding.

## Who else can I talk to about clinical trials?

PAN has a dedicated team of ComPANion Access Navigators to help you understand everything about clinical trials. Call us at **1-855-329-5969**.

Whether you have questions about the clinical trial process, need help using our trial finder tool, or accessing basic needs to support your ability to participate in a trial, our warm and knowledgeable ComPANions are just a phone call away.

## The PAN Foundation's educational commitment

*The PAN Foundation maintains full independence in the creation of educational content, making sure that the materials produced are objective, evidence-based, and free from donor influence.*



## About the PAN Foundation

As a leading charitable foundation and healthcare advocacy organization, the PAN Foundation is dedicated to accelerating access to treatment for those who need it most and empowering patients on their healthcare journeys. We provide critical financial assistance for treatment costs, advocate for policy solutions that expand access to care, and deliver education on complex topics—all driven by our belief that everyone deserves access to affordable, equitable healthcare.

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Learn more at  
[clinicaltrials.panfoundation.org](https://clinicaltrials.panfoundation.org).



Improving access.  
Transforming health.