PAN Foundation

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6 steps to help you prepare for joining a clinical trial

The steps to prepare for joining a trial can be different for each of us. This list is intended to be a guide. As you start the process, you can adapt this list to fit your personal situation.

1. **Read the informed consent form carefully and review it with your healthcare providers**

   Before joining, you need to fully understand what will happen in a clinical trial. The trial team will explain the trial. They'll also provide an informed consent form with the details. And they'll answer any questions you may have.

   It would be best if you took your time to decide what's right for you. You can bring a copy of the informed consent form home and read it again. It's a good idea to review the consent form with your healthcare providers. This can help you make a list of additional questions to ask the trial team before you decide what you want to do.

2. **Talk with people who may be able to lend a hand, such as family and friends**

   Being in a clinical trial may change your routine. But you don't need to go through it alone. The trial team will fully support you throughout the trial. You might find local advocacy groups that offer support for people in trials. And you should let family and friends help. They can support your participation in a trial by:

   - Keeping track of your trial treatment and visit schedule
   - Going with you to visits, driving you to and from the trial site, and taking notes to help you remember what the trial team tells you at visits
   - Helping you remember trial activities you need to complete at home
   - Taking care of daily activities at home, such as preparing meals

3. **Explore options for childcare support**

   If you have young children, you may want to explore childcare options before you enroll in a clinical trial. Some trial sites offer childcare for the days when you come to the trial site. Some trial sponsors will reimburse you for trial-related childcare expenses. You may also want to talk with family and friends to see if they can help. Having a childcare plan can make it easier to go to your trial visits.

4. **Plan ahead for taking time off from work and being away from home**

   While some trials don't require you to come to the trial site often, others require you to be at a trial site for much of the day. The trial schedule will tell you how often you need to visit the trial site. And the trial team can estimate how long the visits will be. There are also some trials with inpatient visits that require you to spend the night. Before you enroll, you should have a plan for managing work and home schedules along with the trial schedule.

5. **Research transportation options**

   In many clinical trials, you must visit a trial site for tests and procedures. Some trial sponsors offer to arrange and pay for transportation to and from the site. Or they may agree to reimburse you for costs when you come to the trial site. Before you join, you'll want to know what's involved in getting to the trial site and what your options are.

6. **Talk with your health insurance company**

   In a clinical trial, you won't pay for treatments, tests, and procedures required as part of the trial. The trial sponsor will cover those costs. But the sponsor won't pay for your regular care. If you receive care that is not part of the trial, you or your health insurance provider will be billed. You should reach out to your insurance provider before you enroll in a trial to better understand your overall coverage. The trial team or a local advocacy group might also be able to help.