

## What is a clinical trial?



A clinical trial, commonly referred to as a clinical study or research study, is designed to determine if a new drug or treatment will be effective in treating a disease or will potentially be of benefit to patients. In cancer (*oncology*) research, clinical trials are studies of new treatments for cancer patients. Clinical trials allow doctors and researchers to gain information on the benefits, side effects, and possible uses of new drugs. They also study different combinations, doses and new uses of existing drugs. Through clinical trials, the medical community may be able to determine new ways to detect, diagnose, treat, and even prevent cancer. Most standard treatments used today were first shown to be effective in previous clinical trials.

Prior to a clinical trial, each new drug or treatment has undergone thorough evaluations in the laboratory and in animal and human studies to identify any harmful side effects, and it must have shown strong potential for improving cancer treatment.

## AMGEN

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A Sutter Health Affiliate

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[www.suttercancer.org](http://www.suttercancer.org).

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*Courage...  
Risk...  
Vision...  
Hope...*

## Clinical Trials for Cancer Patients



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## Am I eligible for a clinical trial?

All clinical trials have guidelines about who can participate. The factors that make a patient eligible to participate in a clinical trial are called "inclusion criteria." The factors that make a patient ineligible are called "exclusion criteria." Examples of these criteria include age, gender, the type and stage of cancer, previous treatment history, and other medical conditions. Inclusion and exclusion criteria are not used to reject or accept people personally. Instead, the criteria are used to identify appropriate participants and keep them safe. The criteria help ensure that researchers will be able to answer the questions they plan to study. If you fit the inclusion and exclusion criteria for a clinical trial, you may be eligible to participate. Ensuring that you meet the inclusion criteria for a particular trial requires an office visit for a physical examination and review of your medical records.



## Is participation right for me?

Patients who take part may be helped by the investigational treatment they receive. Clinical trial participants receive either the standard of care (*what scientists and researchers consider the most effective known treatment available*) or the new drug or procedure being studied. Clinical trial participants have access to new investigational treatments before they are widely available and therefore may have the first chance to benefit from them. In addition to the high-quality care provided by their oncologists, clinical trial participants are carefully monitored by the clinical trials staff. Many cancer patients also express an interest in helping future cancer patients through the knowledge gained from a clinical trial.

## How much will treatment cost?

Investigational drugs used in clinical trials are provided to patients at no cost. Standard drugs, that would be part of your normal care for cancer treatment, are billed to your insurance or Medicare. Expenses not covered by your insurance or Medicare may be billed to you per normal practice.



## Whom can I talk to about participating in a clinical trial?

Please contact your physician or call the Research Department at Sutter Cancer Centers:

- Sacramento 916/454-6595
- Roseville 916/781-1636.