About Clinical Trials

Why participate in Clinical Trials?

The history of humans participating in clinical trials has made a major impact on seeking medical advancements on various diseases or health status. By participating in clinical trials as a research subject, you are given the opportunity to play a major and active role with seeking medical advancements, learning more about your personal health and healthcare needs, and accessing knowledge of new medical therapeutic treatments. You gain the ability to share with others your experience of participating and becoming an "advocate" on clinical trials to expel the myth from the past and the hope for the future. Some people have even shared with us that it allowed them to search their family medical tree and find out which diseases were more prevalent in their family.

What you should know when considering to volunteer for a clinical trial:

You should know as much as possible about the clinical trial and feel comfortable asking questions about it, the care expected while in a trial, and the benefit and potential risks of the trial. The following questions might be helpful to discuss with the clinical trial team. Some of the answers to these questions are found in the informed consent document.

- What is the purpose of the study?
- How do the possible risks, side effects, and benefits in the study compare with my current treatment?
- How might this trial affect my daily life?
- How long will the trial last?
- Will hospitalization be required?
- Who will pay for the treatment?
- Will I be reimbursed for other expenses?
- Will results of the trials be provided to me?
- Who will be in charge of my care?
- What type of test are involved?
- Can my exam results be shared with my personal physician?

It is very important that you continue to work with your primary health care provider. Most clinical trials provide short-term treatments related to a designated illness or condition, but do not provide extended or complete primary health care.

You can leave a clinical trial at any time. When withdrawing from the trial, you should let the research team know about it, and the reasons for leaving the study.

Clinical trials are conducted in a series of steps, called phases - each phase is designed to answer a separate research question.
- **Phase I:** Researchers test a new drug or treatment in a small group of people for the first time to evaluate its safety, determine a safe dosage range, and identify side effects.

- **Phase II:** The drug or treatment is given to a larger group of people to see if it is effective and to further evaluate its safety.

- **Phase III:** The drug or treatment is given to large groups of people to confirm its effectiveness, monitor side effects, compare it to commonly used treatments, and collect information that will allow the drug or treatment to be used safely.

- **Phase IV:** Studies are done after the drug or treatment has been marketed to gather information on the drug's effect in various populations and any side effects associated with long-term use.