

Clinical trials



GLOBAL LUNG CANCER
COALITION

What are clinical trials?

Clinical trials are research studies. They often test new treatments.

Trials can also test better ways of giving current treatments to make them work better or have fewer side effects.

A clinical trial may test:

- New ways to remove lung cancer by surgery
- Different ways to use radiation
- New drugs
- New combinations of current drugs
- Other treatments
- Ways to prevent lung cancer
- New tests to diagnose and understand cancer.

How do they work?

Before a new treatment can be approved, it must be tested. This starts in a laboratory. If the treatment shows promise, it is tested in people through a clinical trial.

All trials use a step-by-step method called “phases.”

If the new treatment is found to be safe and to work as well or better than current treatments (“standard of care”), it moves through the phases.

Clinical trial phases

Phase I: These trials test if a new treatment is safe. For new medications, they test how it should be given, how often and to find the right dose.

Only a small number of people are in phase I trials, sometimes as few as a dozen.

Phase II: These trials also test safety and how well the new treatment works in more people that have the same kind of disease.

Phase III: These trials also test safety and how well the treatment works. They also compare the new treatment with current treatments.

To be approved, the new treatment must work as well or better than current treatments.

Phase IV: After a treatment is approved and in wide-spread use, it may be studied further. Phase IV trials look at side effects and risks and benefit of the treatment.

This is often done over a long period of time and with more people, sometimes thousands.

Is a clinical trial right for me?

Too many times patients feel rushed into treatment before they have had a chance to think about all their options, including trials.

Be sure to talk with your medical team about your options. They are the experts on your care and are best able to advise you about trials that may be right for you.

You will be provided with detailed information on the clinical trial and enough time and opportunity to discuss the trial with doctors or nurses (who are independent of the trial) and family or others who are supporting you.

About placebos:

A placebo is an inactive substance that looks the same and is given in place of the treatment being tested.

People sometimes worry they will get a placebo instead of treatment in a trial.

The fact is, placebos are rarely used in cancer trials. New treatments being tested are almost always tried against a current treatment.

When should I think about a clinical trial?

We suggest you ask about clinical trials as soon as you are diagnosed with cancer and every time you have to decide about treatment.

There are clinical trials for all kinds and stages of lung cancer.

Trials only enroll patients at certain times:

- Before a biopsy
- Before surgery or first drug therapy or radiation treatment (called “neo-adjuvant” studies)
- Right after surgery, drug therapy or radiation treatment (called “adjuvant” studies)

- Before starting first treatment for lung cancer that has spread or has come back (called “first line” studies)
- Before starting the second or third treatments for lung cancer that has spread or come back (called “second line” or “third line” studies).

Why is research important?

Research on all aspects of lung cancer, including prevention, early detection, and treatment, has greatly increased. Ways of treating other types of cancers are being tried in lung cancer. And new ways of doing surgery and radiation have been found.

Thanks to people like you joining clinical trials, there are now more treatments for lung cancer than ever before. Because of these studies, we know more about the things that make lung cancer grow and spread.

The promise of new ways to find and treat lung cancer can only be realised by people joining clinical trials.

If you would like to find out about joining a clinical trial, ask your doctor.



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