

# African Americans and Clinical Research

If you have ever taken a pill or been treated for an illness, you have seen the benefit of clinical trials. Each year, thousands of African Americans take part in clinical trials to help find ways to prevent, treat, and cure illness. Clinical trials help African Americans and all people enjoy better health.



**UCDAVIS**  
**CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL  
SCIENCE CENTER**

 **CISCRP**  
THE CENTER FOR INFORMATION & STUDY  
ON CLINICAL RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

HELPING YOU TO  
MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE

## What are clinical trials?

Clinical trials, also known as “clinical research studies”, or “clinical studies”, are studies in human volunteers that try to answer specific health questions. Some clinical trials measure the safety and effectiveness of potential new treatments. Other clinical trials observe health issues and behaviors in large groups of people.

## Why are pediatric clinical studies conducted?

MANY ILLNESSES such as sickle cell anemia, asthma, diabetes, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, and certain kinds of cancer, such as prostate cancer, affect African Americans more than other people. Yet, little is known about how they respond to treatment, so African American volunteers are needed to help scientists learn how different treatments affect them. When African Americans take part in clinical trials, they help improve the health of all people and provide greater understanding of health disparities.

## Clinical Trials Then and Now

FOR MANY YEARS, most clinical trials were done on white men only. This meant that groups such as African Americans, women, and other minorities were not included. But today, clinical trials welcome the participation of all people, and those clinical trials are closely monitored for their safe and ethical treatment of volunteers.



*CISCRP is not involved in recruiting patients for clinical studies, nor is it involved in conducting clinical studies.*

## How You Are Protected If You Participate

SOME AFRICAN AMERICANS still remember past abuses like the Tuskegee Experiment, in which syphilis treatment was withheld from a group of African American men for many years. People wonder if something like that could happen today.

The answer is NO. Federal guidelines and codes of ethics are in place to protect clinical research volunteers from harm. In addition, an Institutional Review Board, a panel of professionals and community members, is responsible for monitoring study safety and protecting volunteer rights in every clinical trial.

## What You Need To Know

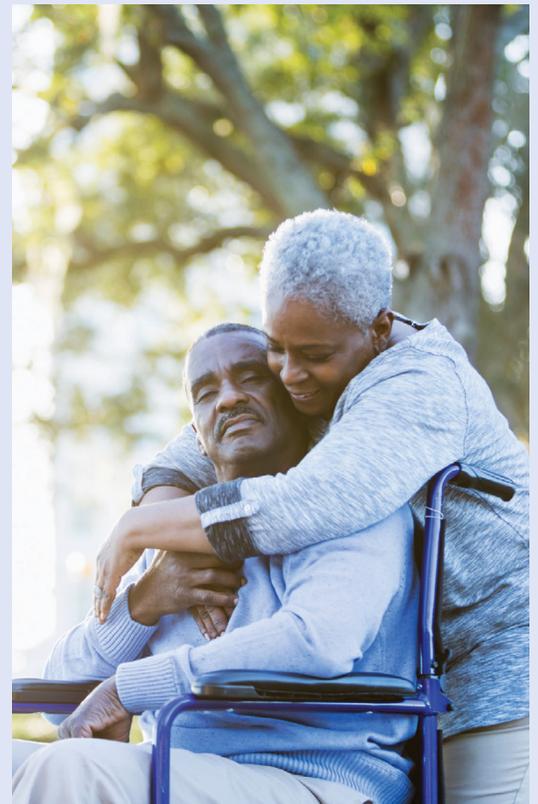
BEFORE YOU ENROLL in a clinical trial, it is a good idea to learn as much as you can about it. You may be interested to know that there are different kinds of clinical trials. Some need healthy volunteers while other clinical trials seek volunteers needing treatment.

A clinical trial is conducted according to a plan called a protocol, which describes:

- What types of volunteers may enter the study
- The schedules of tests and procedures, study medications and dosages
- Length of the study
- Number of study visits

Based on the requirements of the protocol, you may or may not qualify for a specific clinical trial.

If you qualify for the clinical trial, you will be asked to agree in writing to follow the protocol. This is called giving informed consent.





## Things to Consider Before Volunteering

BEFORE TAKING PART in a clinical trial, consider the possible benefits and risks.

### BENEFITS

The investigational treatment studied in a clinical trial may or may not benefit you personally, but the benefits of participating are:

- Possibly getting treatment for an illness when no other treatment exists
- Receiving expert care for your condition
- Having early access to new treatments
- Knowing your participation is helping others

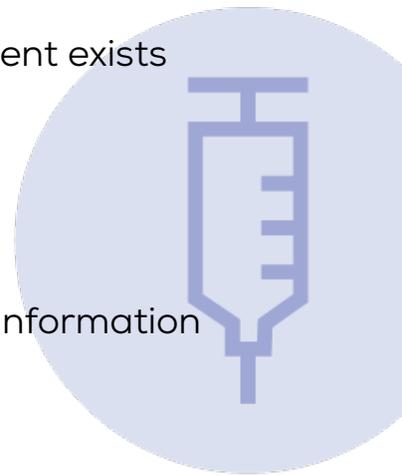
### RISKS

Clinical trials study investigational treatments, therefore, some information about the treatments are unknown. Some risks include:

- Not being able to choose your treatment
- Receiving a treatment that may not work as planned
- Experiencing unpleasant or serious side effects

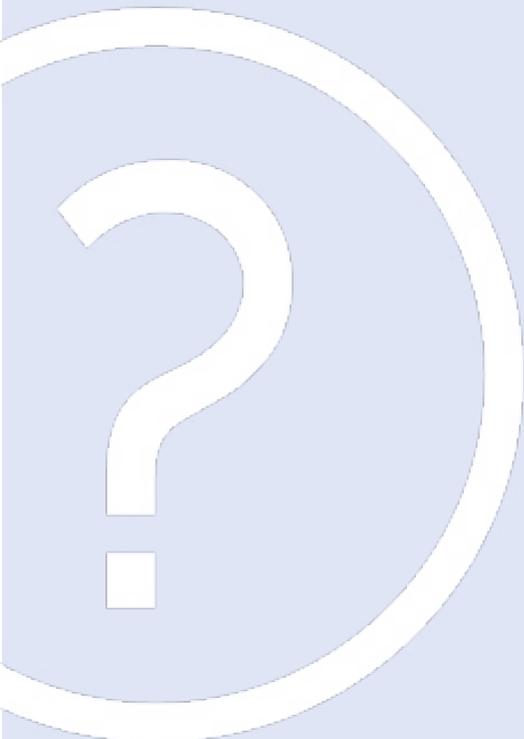
To help you decide if you should participate in a clinical trial, ask questions, search the library or Internet for information (See Learn More About Clinical Trials on back), and seek the advice of family members or a trusted doctor, clergyman or friend.

Remember, your participation in clinical trials is strictly voluntary and you can drop out at any time for any reason.



# Questions to Ask Before Participating in a Clinical Trial

- What is the purpose of this clinical trial?
- Why would researchers think this treatment might work for me?
- What are my treatment options?
- How will this clinical trial help my family or my community?
- What will I be asked to do?
- How long is the clinical trial going to last?
- What are the possible risks?
- Will I have to pay for any part of the clinical trial, and will I be reimbursed for costs of travel, parking, or meals incurred while I am in a clinical trial?
- If the treatment works for me, can I keep using it after the clinical trial ends?
- How will this study affect my daily life?
- Will anyone else know about my participation?



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## CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE CENTER

CTSC Clinical Trials Office  
2921 Stockton Blvd, Suite 1400  
Sacramento, CA 95817  
(855) 823-1660  
[health.ucdavis.edu/participate](http://health.ucdavis.edu/participate)

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CISCRP is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to engaging the public and patients as partners in the clinical research process through education and outreach programs. CISCRP services also assist clinical research stakeholders in understanding public and patient attitudes & experiences in research to improve patient satisfaction. *CISCRP is not involved in recruiting patients for clinical trials, nor is it involved in conducting clinical trials.*

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One Liberty Square • Suite 510 • Boston, MA 02109  
Visit [www.CISCRP.org](http://www.CISCRP.org) or Call toll free 1-877-633-4376

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