



# TIP SHEET Clinical Trials

## What You Need to Know

All the cancer drugs and therapies used today came about after many years of research. Clinical trials are the final stages of this research where physicians and scientists work together to evaluate a promising new treatment or approach. A clinical trial may study or test a new:

- approach to diagnose or prevent cancer
- drug to treat cancer
- way to use or combine existing treatments

When clinical trials identify new and effective methods, these treatments eventually become the new standard of care.

As many as  
**50%**  
 of Roswell Park patients  
 are eligible to join a  
 clinical trial.

Each patient  
 enrolled in a study  
 is assigned a clinical  
 research coordinator who  
 ensures you receive the  
 appropriate care.

## Why Should You Consider a Clinical Trial?

- 1) Enrolling in a trial may be the only way to get a particular kind of treatment.
- 2) If a new treatment is proven effective, you may be among the first to benefit.
- 3) It's an opportunity to help others and improve cancer treatment.

## Are Clinical Trial Treatments a Better First Option?

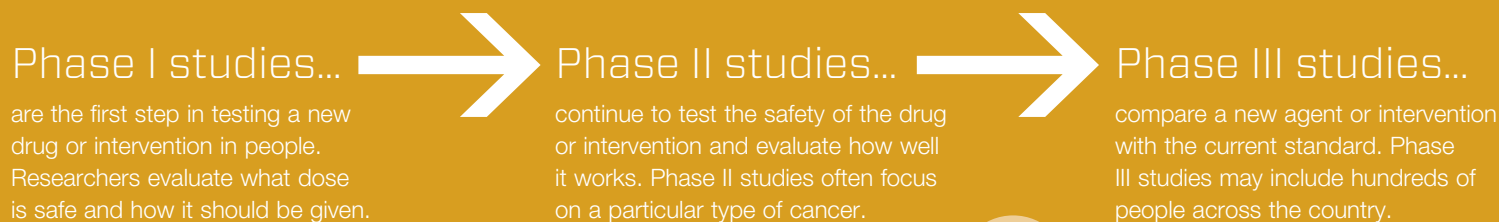
For some patients, yes. As we continue to decode human genes, we can identify certain mutations, characteristics or abnormalities of some cancer cells. We are now developing treatments that target or attack these specific abnormalities, thereby killing cancer cells more effectively.

A study drug that targets a genetic characteristic of your tumor could offer your best option. Some of these treatments have become standard of care. One example is Herceptin, which targets breast and stomach cancers that show abnormal activity of a protein called HER-2. Many more treatments are currently available only through clinical trials.



# The Stages of Clinical Trials

Most clinical trials involve testing a potential new drug. Each study progresses in an orderly series of steps called phases. This allows researchers to ask and answer questions in a way that gives reliable results while protecting patients. Clinical trials usually include three phases.



## Setting the Record Straight

Many people misunderstand the purpose of clinical trials and how they're conducted. Learn the facts you need to make an informed decision about whether to participate.

### Myth

I could get a placebo (pill, liquid or powder) that contains no medicine instead of treatment.

People only enroll in a clinical trial after trying all other options.

Because Roswell Park is a research institution, patients are required to participate in studies.

Once you enroll in a trial, you cannot change your mind.

### Fact

Few cancer clinical trials use placebos, and they are *never* given in place of a treatment. A study may compare standard treatment plus a new treatment to standard treatment plus a placebo. You will be told if a study uses a placebo.

Many patients enroll in a study because it's their *best* option, before any treatment. Some studies don't involve treatment, but examine new ways to prevent cancer or its recurrence.

About half our patients are eligible for a trial, but it's only an option. It is entirely the patient's decision.

You may choose to leave a trial at any time, for any reason.



## Roswell Park's Clinical Research Center

One of the first in the nation to focus specifically on developing new cancer treatments, our center provides more treatment options through clinical research studies, offers the highest level of patient safety and quickly generates precise data on potential new treatments.

Roswell Park has a strong history of cancer research success. Among other milestones, we:

- launched the first chemotherapy research program in the United States in 1904
- developed the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test to detect prostate cancer
- conducted studies that helped gain FDA approval of Gleevec®, now a first line therapy for chronic myeloid leukemia (CML).

Learn more about Clinical Trials at Roswell Park

[roswellpark.org/clinical-trials](http://roswellpark.org/clinical-trials)