



## West Virginia Clinical Trials Network Myths and Facts

There are many myths about clinical trials. As you explore your options, please consider the following and contact us at [info@wvctn.org](mailto:info@wvctn.org) or 304-581-1837 with any questions.

**MYTH:** Clinical trials are only for people with cancer.

**FACT:** Four types of cancer trials are open to people without cancer.

- Prevention trials study ways to prevent cancer in people;
- Early detection/screening trials look at ways to detect cancer as early as possible;
- Diagnostic trials focus on ways to test for or better identify cancer; and
- Genetic trials determine how one's genetic makeup can influence detection and diagnosis of cancer.

**MYTH:** I will be a human guinea pig if I participate in a clinical trial.

**FACT:** It can be scary to agree to participate in something you are unsure about. Some may fear being treated like a number or treated as their disease rather than as a human being. But most people who participate in a clinical trial say the experience was positive and that they were treated with respect. The federal government has patient protection regulations to ensure that people are told about the benefits and risks of the trial before they agree to participate.

**MYTH:** Clinical trials are a “last resort” type of treatment.

**FACT:** Some clinical trials are reserved for patients for which there are no other treatment options for their disease. But there are many types of clinical trials that are open to patients at all stages of treatment.

**MYTH:** If I join a clinical trial I will get a sugar pill (placebo) instead of the treatment.

**FACT:** Placebos are rarely used in clinical trials designed to treat cancer. **No one is ever given a placebo when an effective treatment is available.** However, in rare cases, a placebo may be used when testing a new drug if there is no known effective treatment. Some prevention trials may use a placebo, but these are studies being in done in patients who do not have cancer.

**MYTH:** I will get less quality medical treatment in a clinical trial.

**FACT:** Patients in clinical trials get either the best standard treatment or a new treatment that will be at least as good as the current standard treatment. Patients in clinical trials are closely watched and monitored for their response to the treatment and overall health.

**MYTH:** There is no benefit in taking part in a clinical trial.

**FACT:** All the current treatments that are available today were once tested in the clinical trial process. If a new treatment is found to work, the patients in the study will be among the first to benefit. Patients in trials receive high quality medical care and their participation helps to move science forward in finding better outcomes.

**MYTH:** You will not be told all the risks if you participate in a clinical trial.

**FACT:** By law, patients are required to be told of the potential risks if they participate in a research study. This is part of the informed consent process.

**MYTH:** My health insurance won't pay for treatment provided through a clinical trial.

**FACT:** Many people don't even consider a clinical trial because they are afraid that their health insurance company will not cover the treatment. In fact, your health insurance is required by the Affordable Care Act to pay for treatment costs of clinical trials. Most patients in clinical trials receive reimbursement from their health insurance, but health insurance may not pay all the costs. Talk with your insurance company to see what they will cover and ask the doctor, clinical trial nurse, or social worker if the study sponsor will cover any of the costs.

Sources consulted: National Cancer Institute and Seattle Cancer Care Alliance at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center