

# WHAT IS A CLINICAL TRIAL?

## Frequently asked questions



### 1. What is a clinical trial?

According to [Australian Clinical Trials](#), “clinical trials are research investigations in which people volunteer to test new treatments, interventions or tests as a means to prevent, detect, treat or manage various diseases or medical conditions. Some investigations look at how people respond to a new intervention and what side effects might occur. This helps to determine if a new intervention works, if it is safe, and if it is better than the interventions that are already available.”

### 2. When are clinical trials offered to patients?

Clinical trials can be offered to patients at any time, or you may join a clinical trial as a ‘healthy’ participant. Clinical trials often test a new intervention (type of treatment or way of treatment) and compare it to what is considered the ‘gold standard’ to see if it is better.

### 3. What are the advantages of being on a clinical trial?

Being on a clinical trial provides access to treatments or tests that are not yet available. These expand your treatment options, which may prove to be more effective. Being on a clinical trial also means that you can be closely monitored by a specialist team, including doctors, nurses and study coordinators. By joining a clinical trial, you are also supporting research to help develop future treatment options.

### 4. Are there any disadvantages to being on a clinical trial?

The treatment that you receive might not work as well as other treatments. The treatment may have side effects that are unpleasant, serious or even life-threatening. Being on a clinical trial might involve extra visits, tests and scans.

### 5. Who is the best person to speak to about considering participation in a clinical trial?

You can speak to your GP, medical professionals, your family or friends about being on a clinical trial. You can take as much time as you need to think about taking part in the trial.

### 6. What happens if I don't want to take part in a trial?

Saying “no” will not affect your treatment or relationship with your doctor. If you don’t want to take part in the trial, you will be offered other treatments if they are available.

### 7. What happens if I want to take part in a trial?

If you agree to take part in a clinical trial, the clinical trial doctor will ask you to sign the consent form. You will then be asked to undergo tests or scans to see if you are able to take part in the trial. Saying “yes” does not always guarantee that you can take part. Even if you say “yes”, you can always change your mind.

### 8. Can anyone go onto a clinical trial?

Clinical trials have guidelines about who can join. These are called ‘eligibility criteria’. If you have been asked to join a clinical trial and said “yes”, you may be asked to do tests to see if you are able to take part.

## 9. How can I find out more about clinical trials?

You can ask your GP or medical team about clinical trials.

There's useful information on websites including:

- Cancer Council Victoria: [www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/treatment/clinical-trials](http://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/treatment/clinical-trials)
- Australian Clinical Trials: [www.australianclinicaltrials.gov.au/consumers](http://www.australianclinicaltrials.gov.au/consumers)

For information on specific trials, you can look at Cancer Council Victoria's [VCTL](http://www.cancer.org.au/victoria/clinical-trials). Other trials can be found on clinical trials registers, such as [ANZCTR](http://anzctr.gov.au) or [clinicaltrials.gov](http://clinicaltrials.gov).

- Victorian Cancer Trials Link: [trials.cancervic.org.au/](http://trials.cancervic.org.au/)
- Australian Clinical Trials: [www.australianclinicaltrials.gov.au/](http://www.australianclinicaltrials.gov.au/)

Alternatively, there are clinical trial matching websites where you can register for a clinical trial:

- The George Institute: <https://www.georgeinstitute.org.au/join-us-register>
- HealthMatch: [healthmatch.io/](http://healthmatch.io/)
- ClinTrial Refer: [www.clintrialrefer.org.au/](http://www.clintrialrefer.org.au/)

## 10. Can I be considered for a trial if I live in a regional area?

Yes! Trials happen across the whole of Australia. Teletrials operate in local health services and use telehealth to help patients access trials that are closer to their homes, reducing travel.

## 11. What is the difference between teletrials and telehealth?

Teletrials are a new type of clinical trial offered at multiple locations connected through a 'primary' site. Telehealth is a model of care that uses video calling for consultations with medical professionals. Both teletrials and telehealth reduce the need for patients to travel long distances to access health services.



Scan the QR code to find out more.

*Thank you to Grampians Health and VCCC Alliance consumer representatives for their contribution to the development of this resource.*



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