

# The Clinical Trial Journey

When you participate in a clinical trial, you can learn about your own health and help researchers discover new ways to prevent or treat health conditions — now, and for generations to come.

## What Is a Clinical Trial?

A clinical trial is a research study that tests new medical treatments, procedures, or behavioral interventions on people.

Most clinical trials look something like this:



### Recruitment

You may learn about a clinical trial through an ad, a referral from your doctor, or by directly contacting a trial site. Researchers conduct clinical trials for many brain and nervous system conditions including multiple sclerosis, ALS, epilepsy, stroke, and more.



### Screening



Researchers will check to make sure you meet the study criteria. And if you're eligible, they'll explain the risks and benefits of participating and ask for your informed consent. Even if you don't pass the screening, they may offer to provide you with information about future trials.



### Baseline Visit

At the baseline visit, researchers will gather some basic data before starting the treatment. They may collect samples of your blood or urine. And they may conduct tests such as X-rays, MRIs, or other imaging procedures. They may also use questionnaires or ask about your medical history. The baseline visit is also when they'll usually randomly assign you to a treatment or a control group (the group that doesn't receive the new treatment being studied).



### Treatment

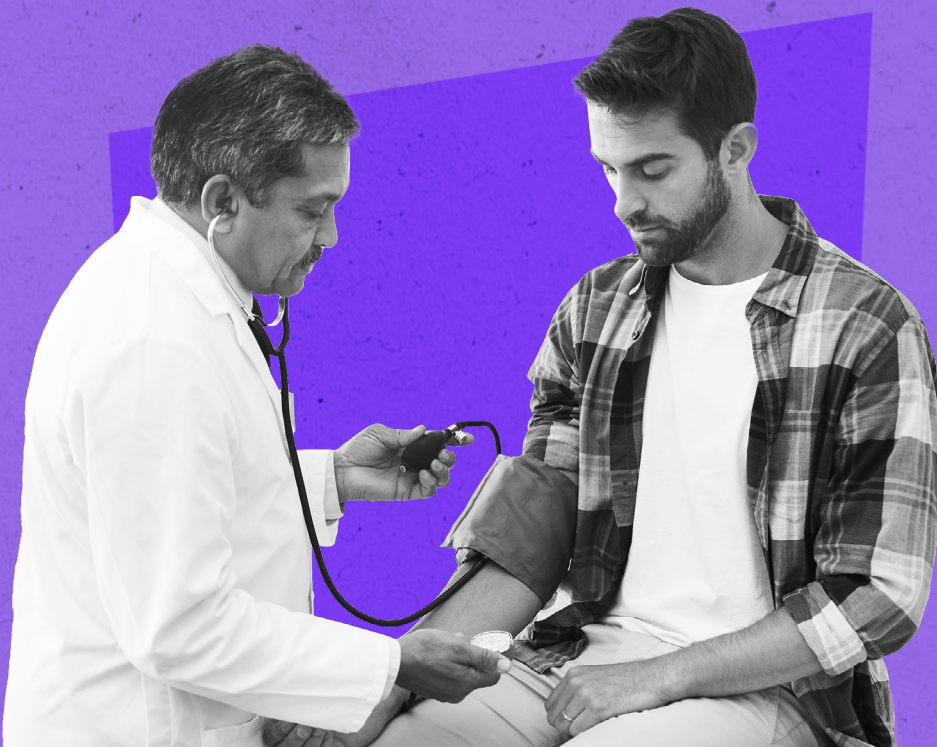


Now that the trial is under way, you'll begin the treatment according to the researchers' instructions. During this phase, researchers will monitor side effects and collect data monitoring your response to the treatment. They may make adjustments to the treatment. And they might ask you to fill out a symptom diary or keep track of things like diet or exercise. This phase may last weeks, months, or even years.



### Follow-up Care

Once the treatment phase is over, you'll usually have follow-up visits for additional testing, interviews, and examinations. You may be asked to report any health changes that happen so researchers can learn more about long-term effects and health outcomes. Finally, once the study ends, researchers may share their findings with you.



## Every Trial Is Different

The details of each clinical trial will vary. This design reduces risk to participants and makes sure you are safe and informed throughout the process.



And it can take years for a drug, device, or treatment to go from testing in trials to full FDA approval. Clinical trials not only help make sure our medicines and treatments are safe, but they also lead to scientific breakthroughs that can revolutionize health.

To learn more about clinical research and how to participate in a trial or study, visit [ninds.nih.gov/clinical-trials](https://ninds.nih.gov/clinical-trials).



National Institute of  
Neurological Disorders  
and Stroke