Article Series Treatments & Trials All

Navigating Clinical Trial Information Websites

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During your cancer care, you may find yourself interested in learning more about clinical trials. If you are considering joining a clinical trial, the best place to start is having a discussion with your care team. They may know of a clinical trial that is a good fit for you.

If you decide to research clinical trials on your own, it is helpful to talk to your care team to gather information about your cancer. Knowing more about your cancer will help you narrow your search for an appropriate trial. You should ask your doctor

about:

- Type of cancer.
  - For example, non-small cell lung cancer, chronic myeloid leukemia, breast cancer or prostate cancer.
- Stage of cancer.
  - For solid tumors, staging is a way to describe the location, size and spread of cancer. There are several systems and terms that may describe a cancer's stage.
    - For example, your doctor may describe your cancer as being stage 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4. Other terms like localized cancer (which is when the cancer is limited to the place it started) or metastatic cancer (which is when the cancer has spread to other parts of the body) may also be used.
  - For blood cancers, each type has its own staging system.
- What other conditions you may have.
  - Some clinical trials may not enroll participants with certain conditions. For example, a trial may not include people with cancer who have recently had a heart attack. Talk with your care team to identify trials that may include participants with your other conditions.
- What previous treatments you have received, if any.
  - Some clinical trials only enroll participants that have not yet received any treatment for their cancer, while other trials may only enroll participants who have already received a certain type of treatment, such as chemotherapy or radiation.
- What specific biomarkers your cancer may have.
  - Biomarkers are certain genetic changes or proteins that can reveal important details about your cancer. To learn more about the different types of biomarkers and how your doctor can test for them, read here.
  - Some examples of biomarkers include mutations in the *ALK* gene in lung cancer or high levels of HER2 protein in breast cancer.

After gathering information about your cancer, you may find it helpful to use an online resource to help search for clinical trials. Below are some of the commonly used websites for searching for clinical trials.

- ClinicalTrials.gov.

- National Cancer Institute. You can also call for help with searching for a clinical trial at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237).
- Center for Information and Study on Clinical Research Participation. You can also call for help with searching for a clinical trial at 1-877-MED HERO (1-877-633-4376).
- EmergingMed.

When using these websites, it may be useful to bookmark or print the webpage or write down certain details of the clinical trials you are interested in. You can bring this information to your care team for discussion and ask them any questions you may have about the trial. For example, you may want to write down the names of treatments being studied or the locations where the trials are being conducted, such as a cancer center or a community hospital. A single trial may take place in just one or two locations or at many different sites. If a trial takes place at a different location than where you are currently being treated, talk to your care team about the next steps you can take. Resources such as travel reimbursements may be available to help you access trials not near you.

If you’re interested in joining a trial, you may be able to contact the trial team directly or your care team can contact them on your behalf. Your care team can also provide any recommendations, answer any questions and discuss the risks and benefits of joining the trial you are interested in.