



Helping Researchers Find the Answers: A Way to Give Something Special to Others

Why is medical research needed?

The purpose of medical research is to learn how our bodies work, why we get sick, how we can prevent ourselves from getting sick and what we can do to get and stay well. The goal of medical research is to improve our health. Each study tries to answer a specific question. There are several types of medical research. Some studies are done to learn what causes disease and how to avoid getting sick. Others are done to improve how we treat disease.

What are examples of medical research that have helped people?

Research studies have given us the answers to many important questions. We have learned which treatments work best for lung diseases like asthma, cystic fibrosis, tuberculosis and COPD. Research has also helped us develop important procedures such as lung transplants and equipment such as MRI machines.

Why should I enroll (join) in a research study?

You can help researchers learn more by joining a research study. Results from the studies may help you and others, both now and in the future. The information that we currently have about lung disease and medications came because people before you agreed to be in research studies. Another reason to be in a research study is that you may get new treatments, not available to your health care provider, at no cost to you.

Is there anything I can learn about myself from enrolling in a research study?

Joining a research study can help you learn about your own health. Many people enrolled in research studies report that they received good quality care and that the experience was helpful. However, there are risks to research. For example, the treatment being tested may not be useful to you. There may also be side-effects from the treatment or procedure being studied. Not all studies have side effects, but because they are important to know about, you will be asked to closely watch yourself during the research study. The research team trusts that you will be very honest about how you feel. They may also ask you to stop the study if they feel

the side effects may harm you. The consent form you sign before you start the study will describe what types of problems may occur from enrolling in the study.

Should I enroll in a research study?

Only you can decide whether or not you should join a research study. You should make this decision with the help of family, friends, health care professionals, and others you trust. Joining in a research study may not lead to a “major” scientific breakthrough that you read about; however, each study provides new information that is helpful.

What things should I think about before enrolling in a study?

When you meet with the research team, they will give you a consent form to review. This form tells you what the study is about, how often you will need to come to the research center for tests, any side effects from being in the study, and how long the study will last. The research team wants this to be a good experience for you and in turn, they wish to get all the information possible about your experience. Get all the information you can before agreeing to enroll in the study. Before making your decision to participate in a study, be sure you know the answer to the following questions:

- Why do they want to do the study? What do they want to find out from the study?
- What do I have to do? How often will I have to come to the center, what tests or medication will I have to take?
- What problems might I have as a result of being in the study? Are the chances of my having side effects slim or very high? How serious are these side effects? What will the researchers do to try to limit the possibility of side effects?
- Is the study likely to benefit me? Will this possibly result in my taking a better drug or treatment for my problem?
- How long will I be in the research study? Will I be enrolled in the study for a few months or a few years?
- Are there any reasons why I would not want to be in the study? Will the tests cause any pain? Will I have to stay at the research center overnight? Will there be any cost to me for traveling?

Authors:
Submitted by
Joan M. Mangan, PhD, MST,
and Lynn B. Gerald, PhD, MSPH,
on behalf of the
Behavioral Science Assembly

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