



Clinical Trials for Cancer Treatment



Overview

As part of your cancer treatment, you may have the option to take part in a clinical trial. This is a study of a drug or a procedure, usually one that has not yet been approved for widespread use. Clinical trials help doctors determine which treatments are effective and which are not.

Eligibility

Patients volunteer to be part of clinical trials. If you wish to join one, your doctor can help you find one or more trials that could be right for you. You will need to meet certain eligibility requirements. Not all clinical trials are right for all patients.

Phases

Trials are categorized in phases from I to IV. During a Phase I trial, a drug or procedure is tested on humans for the first time. These trials usually involve very small groups of healthy volunteers. They help doctors learn basic information, such as the proper dosage for a medicine. If this trial shows that a treatment could be effective, it can move on to Phase II and Phase III trials. These are more rigorous tests on larger groups of people. They show how well the treatment can work for specific cancers and patients. If a treatment passes these trials, it can be approved for standard use. After approval, a treatment can also go through a Phase IV trial. This is designed to collect information about its long-term safety and effectiveness.

Conclusion

Clinical trials are a valuable part of medical research. Patients who take part in them help doctors create better treatment plans for all cancer patients. Talk to your doctor to find out if a clinical trial is right for you.