



## Clinical Trials—What Patients Should Know

(NAPSA)—Advances in medicine, which occur almost daily, are largely made possible by clinical trials. The trials are controlled studies that test and evaluate new drugs and medical treatments. These trials are not just for the seriously ill; people who are interested in contributing to the advancement of science can also participate.

The system works like this:

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) evaluates applications from pharmaceutical companies and government agencies seeking approval for new drugs and treatments. To demonstrate the safety and efficacy of the drugs and treatments, companies conduct clinical trials using volunteers who have either been recommended for studies by their physicians or have sought them on their own because other treatments have proven ineffective.

“Patients should be informed of the risks and benefits involved in the trial before it begins,” said Peter J. Plantes, M.D. “Because the trials involve treatments for which the potential side effects are unknown, patients are expected to be monitored very carefully for the duration of the study.”

Whether you are sick or healthy, there are ways to determine if entering a clinical trial is right for you. LaurusHealth.com, a consumer health information Web site, offers these tips:

- Talk with your physician to determine if you are a good candidate for the trial.
- Find out in advance how long the trial is expected to last.
- Ask the trial coordinator what kind of tests and treatments



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will be involved.

- Consult with the coordinator about potential side effects and how these might affect your daily life.

- Inquire about long-term follow up care—is it provided and who will be responsible for any associated costs?

“What is important,” stressed Dr. Plantes, “is to make an informed decision.”

There are various sources to locate where clinical trials are being conducted. Many patients who participate in trials have found them by asking their physician or by doing research on the Internet. Links to information about clinical trials that are being conducted across the nation can be found at [www.LaurusHealth.com](http://www.LaurusHealth.com).

LaurusHealth.com was created in association with leading hospitals and physicians across the nation to help consumers make more informed choices about their health.