

Lifelines™

from the National Cancer Institute



RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT CANCER CLINICAL TRIALS IN MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

By the National Cancer Institute

In communities of color, the words “clinical trial” or “research study” sometimes raise concerns that are rooted in memories of infamous studies of the past, such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. Because of this history, there is often not a lot of talk about clinical trials in these communities. But it’s important that we hold these conversations.

Every day, people are diagnosed with cancer. And every day, researchers are working to find ways to prevent, find, and treat cancer. Clinical trials are a critical tool that researchers use to test whether new methods are better and safer than existing methods. Without clinical trials, many of the recent advances in cancer would not have been possible.

Have you heard the term “clinical trials,” but don’t know much about them? Have you been told that clinical trials are “experiments to avoid” unless all other treatments have failed? (That is not true, by the way.) Two valuable resources to help you learn more about clinical trials are [Learn About Clinical Trials](#) from the National Cancer Institute and [NIH Clinical Trials and You](#) from the National Institutes of Health. Clinical trials have long been surrounded by some mystery and myth, but these websites explains the truth in clear terms. Here are some of the topics you can learn about:

- What are clinical trials?
- Why do people take part?
- What do I need to know if I am thinking about participating?
- What questions should I ask if offered a clinical trial?
- How is my safety protected?
- How does the outcome of clinical research make a difference?
- Where do clinical trials take place?
- How can I find a clinical trial?
- Who pays for clinical trials?

Many racial and ethnic groups, including Hispanics, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans, are disproportionately affected by certain types of cancer. To find detection

Posted April 2013

and treatment options that are effective for people in all racial/ethnic groups, it is important that people from all groups participate in clinical trials.

Participants in cancer clinical trials often have access to new treatments that are not available to others. Their health is watched carefully by the research team to make sure that they are safe. And if the treatment being studied is effective, they may be among the first to benefit from it.

Have you or someone you care about been affected by cancer? It's worth a few minutes of your time to learn about clinical trials and why they could be right for you or your loved one. Check out NCI's and NIH's clinical trials websites and get information that can help. Clinical research saves lives, now and in the future.

NCI leads the National Cancer Program and the NIH effort to dramatically reduce the burden of cancer and improve the lives of cancer patients and their families, through research into prevention and cancer biology, the development of new interventions, and the training and mentoring of new researchers. For more information about cancer, please visit the NCI web site at www.cancer.gov or call NCI's Cancer Information Service at 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237). More articles and videos in the culturally relevant Lifelines series are available at www.cancer.gov/lifelines.