

What is a clinical trial?

A patient's guide

Research at Royal Papworth Hospital

At Royal Papworth Hospital, we are proud of our high-quality care. Healthcare is always changing, so we must keep improving. That's why we have an active research program.

What is a Clinical trial?

A clinical trial is a research study that tries to find new ways to improve health. People volunteer to be in clinical trials. In most clinical trials, researchers compare a new treatment with the usual treatment.



Clinical trials can:

- Test new treatments for a certain disease or condition to see if they work better than the current treatments
- Test treatments or lifestyle changes to see if they prevent or lower the chance of getting certain diseases
- Test new ways of finding out if people have certain diseases



In some new medicine studies, there may be no existing treatment to compare. Researchers give patients either the new drug or a placebo. A placebo looks the same as the medicine being tested but has no active drug inside. Neither the patient nor the healthcare team knows which was given, helping ensure equal treatment and accurate results.

Why is volunteering for research important?

The treatments we give today are based on research from the past. This research depended on patients volunteering to join a clinical trial. Developing new treatments is only possible if patients volunteer to take part in research.



Who can be in a clinical trial?

At Royal Papworth Hospital you must be aged 18 or over to take part in one of our clinical trials. However, It depends on the trial. Some trials include only people with specific diseases, conditions, or family histories. Others involve healthy people instead.



Not everyone can join a trial. Researchers set rules, like needing the disease being studied, a specific age, or certain health conditions. You might need to answer questions or take tests to see if you're eligible.



What are the benefits of being in a clinical trial?

People can benefit in different ways. People who have the disease being studied can benefit by:

- Having a chance to get a new treatment before it is available to the public.
- Having a research and healthcare team, dedicated to the delivery of trials within the hospital.
- Knowing that they are helping people who will have the same disease in the future.



Healthy volunteers can benefit from being in clinical trials, too, by:

- Knowing that they are helping others
- Learning about their health and about research



What are the downsides of being in a clinical trial?

The downsides can include the following:

- The new treatment could cause side effects, which might be unknown.
- It might not work as well as the current treatment or might not work at all.
- You might not get the new treatment during the study, and you won't know which treatment you got until the study ends.



How can you get involved?

People are at the heart of our research. You have many chances to share your views, help shape future trials or join ongoing studies. You might be asked to join a study while you're waiting, while you're here, or after you go home. You'll get all the information you need to decide.



Your choice matters

You do not have to say yes. If you say no, it won't change your care or treatment. If you do say yes, the research might not help you right now, but it could help other people in the future. If you change your mind later, you can stop being part of the study anytime.



Learn more

For more information on research at Royal Papworth Hospital, please visit our website by scanning the QR code or email papworth.randdadmin@nhs.net.

Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

A member of Cambridge University Health Partners



Papworth Road
Cambridge Biomedical Campus
CB2 0AY



royalpapworth.nhs.uk



01223 638000

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Scan the QR code or head to royalpapworth.nhs.uk/membership to find out more.



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