

What You Should Know

When individuals are first diagnosed with cancer, they experience a myriad of emotions from shock and denial to anger and fear. Once the initial feelings have sunk in completely, patients have a choice to make on how to fight and beat the cancer. One of the first steps in the process is to learn as much as possible about the specific cancer you are fighting and to discuss with your doctor the best treatment options.

One option to consider is participation in a clinical trial. This is a research method used to find better ways to prevent or treat a disease. Clinical trials help doctors determine if a new treatment works, and if it is safe for all patients. Thousands of cancer patients have taken part in this kind of research. And, all of today's cancer drugs were initially tested through clinical trials.

Learn as Much as You Can

When you are first diagnosed with cancer, learn all you can about your treatment options. Most people have concerns about taking part in clinical trials because they're not sure what is involved. Educating yourself about clinical trials is the best way to know whether you are making a good choice for your situation.

There is no right or wrong choice when it comes to taking part in a clinical trial. The decision to participate in a trial is a very personal one. You should consider the benefits and risks of a trial, and then determine what you hope to gain by taking part in a study.

How Clinical Trials Work

After clinical trials are developed by physicians, they are then reviewed by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Upon receiving NCI approval, trials are released to the institutional review boards of participating hospitals.

All new cancer treatments must first be tested in clinical trials. There are three phases to the process. A treatment must pass all of these steps before it can be approved by the FDA (Food & Drug Administration) for widespread use. The McLeod Cancer Center for Treatment & Research enrolls patients in Phase II and Phase III trials.

Phase II

A small number of patients are selected for participation in this phase of cancer research. Phase II clinical trials test the treatment to see if it works against a certain type of cancer. If it does work, the treatment moves on to Phase III.

Phase III

This phase of cancer research involves hundreds, sometimes thousands, of patients. The goal is to compare the new treatment to the best known treatment for a specific kind of cancer. Phase III clinical trials are often conducted in local hospitals, but they may also be conducted in cancer clinics and doctors' offices. If you decide to join a clinical trial, you will more than likely enter a Phase III clinical trial.

Who Can Answer My Questions About Clinical Trials?

For more information on Cancer Clinical Trials, call the McLeod Cancer Research office at (843) 777-6387 or 777-6388; or visit the following website at <http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials>.

About the McLeod Cancer Research Department

McLeod participates in state-of-the-art cancer research trials for prevention and treatment of cancer through medication. For 25 years, the McLeod Cancer Research Department has made clinical trials available to eligible patients in the Pee Dee, Grand Strand and a portion of North Carolina.

McLeod's participation in cancer research is supported through its association with the Southeast Cancer Control Consortium, a group of community hospitals in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia and Tennessee. McLeod also collaborates in research with the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the Southwest Oncology Group, the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute, the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project (NSABP) - a clinical trials cooperative group supported by NCI, Cancer & Leukemia Group B (CALGB), another national clinical research group sponsored by NCI, and the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC).

In 2007, McLeod joined the Medical University of South Carolina's (MUSC) Hollings Cancer Center as the newest member to its Clinical Trials Network. This program, unique to South Carolina, provides access to cancer clinical trials research across the state and enables sites to share resources and work together to deliver quality cancer clinical trials.

By joining the network program, physicians at McLeod can offer unique clinical trials developed by Hollings Cancer Center physicians to patients who can participate in these trials locally at McLeod. These patients can see their own doctors while remaining in close proximity to their families.

Cancer Clinical Trials - How Cancer Research is Conducted at McLeod



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