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Clinical Trials



ORCHID 
FIGHTING MALE CANCER



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Clinical Trials

The aim of a clinical trial is to improve a particular treatment for cancer which may involve modifying existing medical or surgical treatment to improve its success or to improve how a treatment is tolerated for instance by reducing side effects.

Clinical trials are essential for developing successful cancer treatments and it may take many years to develop a specific trial from an idea to standard treatment.

During treatment for testicular cancer men may be asked if they would like to take part in a clinical trial. This will be entirely up to them and will not affect the treatment that they will subsequently receive.

Clinical trials: pros and cons

Pros

Men may have the chance to be treated with a new type of drug or procedure which is not available normally.

Men may feel that you are helping develop treatment that may help other people in the future.

Cons

Many trials use a process called randomisation which means that a computer will decide whether someone ultimately receives the new treatment or whether they receive a placebo (sugar pill) or the standard treatment.

Men are likely to have to attend regular more frequent hospital visits where blood tests and other procedures will need to be performed more frequently than normal.

The treatment may ultimately not prove to be any better than the standard treatment you would have received.



All clinical trials must pass through certain stages known as phases before they can be used safely in general medical practice. See next page for more.

There are four phases to clinical trials:

Phase 1

This involves research about safety and side effects, and whether the proposed treatment has any potential benefits for humans.

Phase 2

This looks at how well a treatment works usually among a small group of people and collects information about safety and side effects.

Phase 3

This tests a new treatment against the best existing treatment among a larger group of people to see if the benefits from the previous phases continue.

Phase 4

This is the widespread use of the new treatment in practice. Researchers will still collect information on its effectiveness as a treatment and whether there are any side effects not obvious from the previous phases.

Even if men initially take part in a clinical trial they can change their mind at a later stage without their future treatment being affected.

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