What You Should Know Before Participating in a Research Study

UCLA Provides Healthcare and Conducts Medical Research

For nearly 100 years, UCLA, physicians and researchers at The University of California, Los Angeles, have worked to find new ways to improve medical care for you and many other people.

Volunteers in research studies—people just like you—are a critical link in making these discoveries possible

What You Should Know About Medical Research

Medical research is an organized, well-planned study of a problem in health care. We engage in research to answer specific questions about what makes people sick and what could make them better. The answers tell us what we can do in the future to help prevent diseases and improve medical care.

Research is not the same as treatment. Scientists do research because they are not certain what is best to help you.

Points to Consider

- During the research process, you may get better, you may stay the same, or you may even get worse.
- As health care professionals, we will always give you excellent medical care. As researchers, we must also follow a research plan very carefully
- We will tell you everything that we know about the benefits and risks of the research study before you volunteer.

Deciding to Participate in a Study

To help you decide, someone in the research team will explain details of the study to you.

- We will give you an informed consent document that describes important facts about the study.
- We encourage you to consider the informed consent thoughtfully. You may want to discuss it with family and friends, with another doctor, or with other people you trust.
- Before you sign the informed consent form to join a study, you should take as much time as you want to think about your decision. Ask us questions if there is anything you don’t understand. We will protect the privacy of information we collect about you.
- As a volunteer, you have many rights that protect YOU!
- You have the right to choose whether or not to volunteer- no one else should make that choice for you.
- You have the right to understand what the research is before you agree to take part.
- You have the right to change your mind at any time. You may leave the study for any reason.

You are Protected as a Volunteer

Medical research has built into it many layers of protection for you as a research volunteer:

- We must ask you or your legal representative if you agree before we put you in a research study.
- Doctors, nurses and medical staff have a code of ethics they follow while taking care of you.

- Medical researchers must also follow codes of ethics for medical research involving humans. There are rules that have been developed over the decades to protect the rights of research participants.
- This University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) protects your safety and rights before and while you take part in a study.
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services also have laws that regulate how we protect volunteers in research.

Please see here for more information.

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