

LET'S TALK WHAT

Understanding clinical trials

Clinical trials help researchers learn how our bodies respond to medicines and other treatments. It's only through clinical trials that investigational medicines, treatments and devices can be approved for public use.

Clinical trials also help us learn how an investigational medicine works, whether it treats a disease and what side effects it might cause. Each study has specific eligibility criteria that people must meet in order to participate.

It's important to understand that clinical trials are completely voluntary. Participants play a valued role in medical research and have rights, including the ability to leave the trial at any time.¹



Clinical trials help us understand whether investigational medicines or new uses for existing treatments are safe and effective.

LET'S TALK TOGETHER

Learn more about the importance of representation in clinical trials

Representation in clinical trials helps researchers gain a more complete picture of how investigational medicines work across populations. This helps support the development of safe and effective medicines for those who are most affected by the disease or condition being studied.

The best way to find out if joining a clinical trial is right for you is to ask questions. Talk to your health care provider—they can help you get the information you need to make an informed decision.



Visit **LetsTalkClinicalTrials.com** for more information, including resources for help finding clinical trials.

REFERENCES

1. Are Clinical Trials Safe? National Cancer Institute. Accessed September 2025. <https://www.cancer.gov/research/participate/clinical-trials/safety>.
2. QuickFacts: United States. United States Census Bureau. Published July 1, 2024. Accessed September 2025. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US>.
3. Cavazzoni P, Anagnostiadis E, Lolic M. *2020 Drug Trials Snapshots Summary Report*. U.S. Food and Drug Administration; 2021:3.

Updated July 2026

Copyright © 2026 Merck & Co., Inc., Rahway, NJ, USA, and its affiliates. All rights reserved.

LET'S

TALK

TRIALS

Learn more about what clinical trial participation involves—and how it may help contribute to future advancements in health care research for your community.





LET'S TALK TRIALS

Barriers to clinical trial participation

Barriers that may keep people from participating in clinical trials include:

- **Lack of awareness** of available clinical trials or how to participate
- **Mistrust of the medical system** due to past personal experiences or the experiences of others in your community
- **Location** of trial site and transportation issues
- **Logistical** concerns like lack of childcare or inability to take time off from work

Clinical trial participants can ask questions and get more information on any of these potential issues from the clinical trial site before enrolling in a trial.

LET'S TALK HOW

Why representation in clinical trials matters

Diseases can impact people differently based on their age, gender, weight, race, ethnicity and other factors. That's why it's important for clinical trials to include people from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Every person who takes part has the potential to bring us one step closer to a future where clinical research can be more informed and inclusive.

LET'S TALK WHY

Importance of participation

By participating in a clinical trial, you can contribute to research that seeks to better understand how medicines work across different communities. Other factors include:



Advancing science

Contribute to data that may advance research and help future generations



Building trust

Advocate for inclusion and representation in clinical trials

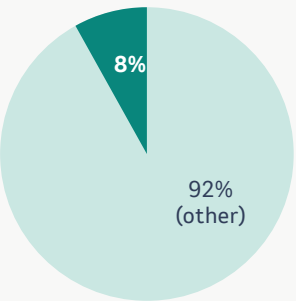


Becoming informed

Take a more active role in your health journey

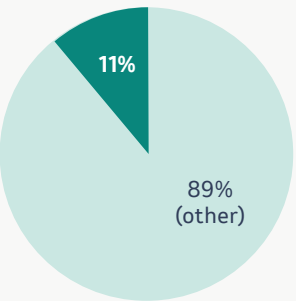
Representation gaps in clinical trials (2020)

Black Representation in Clinical Trials³



Compared to their 13.7% share of the U.S. population.²

Hispanic or Latino Representation in Clinical Trials³



Compared to their 19.5% share of the U.S. population.²