

CLINICAL TRIALS: Finding a Clinical Trial¹

In this PIP Digest, we describe how you can find information about trials that may be relevant to you or your loved ones.

Key Concepts

- Finding a clinical trial online
- Identifying trials with specific characteristics

Related PIP Digests

- Cancer Research: What is a Clinical Trial?
- Clinical Trials: Precision Medicine and Clinical Trials

If you are thinking about joining a clinical trial as a treatment option, the best place to start is by talking with your doctor or another healthcare professional. Your doctor may know about a clinical trial that is a good option for you. He or she can also research current trials and provide you with information and answers to help you decide if a clinical trial is right for you. Even with research, your doctor may not be aware of every clinical trial that could be an option for you, so you may want to get a second opinion to ensure you have thoroughly explored your options.

If you decide to look for a clinical trial, knowing the details of your cancer diagnosis will help you determine whether you meet eligibility criteria. Researchers will likely want to know the full medical name of your cancer, where it started, its current location and status, the cell type and stage, any cancers you've had before, the details of your previous cancer treatments, and any other health issues that might affect the research results.

Searching clinical trials databases can sometimes be challenging. ClinicalTrials.gov (<https://clinicaltrials.gov/>) is a free service of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, maintained by the U.S. National Library of Medicine. This comprehensive website, documents trials from all over the world. Information on ClinicalTrials.gov is provided and updated by the sponsor or principal investigator of the study. Each record includes a summary of the study protocol, including the purpose, recruitment status, and eligibility criteria. Study locations and specific contact information are listed to assist with enrolment. Trial descriptions are very technical and may require interpretation by a medical professional.

The Canadian Cancer Trials website (<http://www.canadiancancertrials.ca/>) is a subset of the larger ClinicalTrials.gov database and includes only cancer trials in Canada. In addition, all provinces in Canada also have clinical trial databases.

All clinical trials are required to be registered, although some data suggests that only about one-third are entered online before they start. There are several international initiatives to improve trial quality and trial reporting:

¹Adapted from: <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/clinical-trials/search/trial-guide> (accessed on August 1, 2017).

- SPIRIT (Standard Protocol Items: Recommendations for Interventional Trials (<http://www.spirit-statement.org/>) is an international initiative aimed at improving the quality of clinical trial protocols by defining and standardizing an evidence-based set of items to address in a protocol.
- All Trials.net (<http://www.alltrials.net/>) advocates for clinical research to adopt the principles of open research. Under the guiding principle, "All trials registered, all results reported." the project pushes for all clinical trials be registered and for all trial results be shared as open data.
- The CONSORT Statement (<http://www.consort-statement.org/>) outlines minimum evidence-based recommendations for reporting randomized trials. These guidelines help researchers reports on concluded trial findings in a standardized, complete, and transparent way.

Tips for Using Trials Databases

If you decide to look for trials on your own, here are some steps to help you find trials on ClinicalTrials.gov. Please note that this information should not be used in place of advice from a medical professional.

- Start with the **Advanced Search** option. This will give you more parameters to narrow your search.
- Under **Status**, selecting "Recruiting." This will give you a list of trials that are actively looking for participants. Note that even when a trial has multiple centres but only one that is recruiting, that trial will be included here.
- Under **Eligibility Criteria**, select your age or age group to help narrow the search.
- Under **Condition**, enter the specific relevant cancer site. This will generate a submenu of cancers at various stages. You can select a specific stage, if that is relevant, or stick with the more general term.
- Go to **Targeted Search**. If there is a specific intervention/treatment that you are looking for, then again under Targeted Search, specify it in the **Intervention/Treatment** field.
- Under **Locations**, select Canada. If you want to specify a province or city, do so in the Location Terms box.
- If you are interested in a specific trial phase — let's say, Phase III trials — you can tick off this box under **Additional Criteria**.
- Run your search query to generate a list of trials that meet your selected criteria.
- Click on an individual trial to access its details. Each description will provide inclusion and exclusion criteria. Often these descriptions are written in technical language. You may need a healthcare professional to help you determine if you (or a loved one) qualify for a given trial.

Each trial description lists participating centres. It may provide email or phone contact, but sometimes provides just the Centre name. For some trials, you may have to complete a form with your contact information in order to receive information about the trial contact.

The Canadian Cancer Trials website (<http://www.canadiancancertrials.ca/>) contains only cancer trials in Canada. The provide answers to frequently asked questions and tips on finding trials at:

http://www.canadiancancertrials.ca/help_faqs.aspx?lang=en#search_for_clinicaltrials

For ease of understanding, each trial description has four sections: summary, trial details, eligibility, and centres/contact. On the centres/contacts page, be sure to click on the centres to see the contact details (see below).

Rituximab, Bendamustine Hydrochloride, and Bortezomib Followed by Rituximab and Lenalidomide in Treating Older Patients With Previously Untreated Mantle Cell Lymphoma

Summary Trial Details Eligibility Centres / Contacts

Show: All Provinces Show only recruiting locations

Trial Centre	Location	Province	Status
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Click on the centre to reveal the trial contact details</div> The Moncton Hospital Nizar N. Abdel-Samad 506-857-5267	Moncton	New Brunswick	Recruiting

135 MacBeath Avenue
Moncton, New Brunswick E1C 6Z8 [\[View Map\]](#)

Other Resources

The organizations listed below all have resources for patients on their websites, which may be useful in your search for and understanding of clinical trials.



Canadian Cancer Clinical Trials Network is a pan-Canadian initiative to improve the efficiency and quality of academic clinical cancer trials. It supports and coordinates a network of teams at cancer treatment centres and hospitals, helping to increase their capacity and capability to conduct academic trials. See <https://3ctn.ca/>.



Canadian Cancer Trials Group (CCTG) is a cooperative oncology group that designs and administers clinical trials in cancer therapy, supportive care, and prevention across Canada. It supports a collaborative network of researchers, physicians, scientists, and statisticians from more than 80 institutions, comprising over 2,100 Canadian investigators who have facilitated over 500 trials in more than 40 countries. CCTG's Central Operations and Statistics Office is located at the Cancer Research Institute of Queen's University. See <https://www.ctg.queensu.ca/>.



N2 Network of Networks is a not-for-profit incorporated organization and an alliance of Canadian research networks and organizations working to enhance national clinical research capability and capacity. N2 brings together trialists and clinical research professionals from across the country, providing a common platform for sharing best practices, resources, and research-related content to ensure efficient and high-quality research, integrity of clinical practices and accountability. See <https://n2canada.ca/resources/>.



The Canadian Clinical Trials Coordinating Centre works to introduce operational efficiencies in clinical trials, based on both recommendations from a 2012 action plan to attract clinical trials to Canada and, more recently, on identified needs for Canadian clinical trials. Its goals are to improve the coordination of clinical trials in Canada, increase participation in trials, and strategically raise Canada's profile among international companies. See <http://www.cctcc.ca/>.

Reviewer: Craig Earle, MD
Last revised: 2019-Jul-23