How to Participate in Clinical Research for Diabetes

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What You Need to Know About Diabetes Clinical Studies

You've probably seen a new anti-diabetes drug that is currently recruiting participants in the news. You've probably wondered if you would be a suitable candidate for such a study. The answer to that question depends on the type of study, your condition and a variety of other factors.

What Is a Clinical Study?

Clinical studies are research trials that test various medical therapies and protocols for preventing or managing a condition, including diabetes.

There are specific and strict regulations, involving a team of medical doctors, nurses, technicians, dentists and other healthcare professionals and supporting staff. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the FDA closely monitor all clinical studies.

Clinical Centers are often the first medical centers that promote new studies and make new therapies available to the participants before the treatments are fully tested and become available to all patients.

Do I Have to Be Diabetic to Participate?

The answer to this question depends on the goal of the study, but as a general rule, each study will have it's own specific requirements you'd have to meet.

In some cases, researchers seek new therapies to prevent this condition and would look for subjects who may be at risk to develop diabetes (i.e. overweight, sedentary, with family history of diabetes), but have not yet been diagnosed.

In other cases, the study will involve a new drug for diabetes, would require a diabetic, so the researchers can evaluate how effective or safe the new drug actually is. Sometimes the participants of the study will be divided into two groups; one group will receive the new drug, while the second group will receive an old drug or a dummy pill. These results are then compared.

Although most studies are conducted using adults, some will be designed for special portion of the population such as children, the elderly, or pregnant women.

Will I Be Compensated?

Clinical centers do not charge patients to be involved in a study. In many cases, subjects are compensated for participating in the study, and the treatment comes free of charge. In emergency situations, these research centers may also cover some travel or other expenses.

Are Diabetes Clinical Studies Safe?

If you're considering becoming a subject in a study for a new drug that is being tested for diabetes, consider the risks and benefits. All drugs are designed to provide health benefits, but are also associated with possible side effects. Since the drug is not fully tested or approved by the FDA, take your time to fully understand the possibility of adverse reactions.

You will have to sign an informed consent letter before the study, which will include and describe in details possible side effects (including major side effects such as the risk of death, strokes, heart attacks or cancer). A healthcare professional will also talk to you before signing the consent form and help answer any questions you may have.