

Participating in Clinical Research

Clinical research studies help scientists learn more about **mental health conditions**, including depression and bipolar disorder. These studies lead to new treatments, medications, and ways to manage symptoms. Your participation can help improve care for yourself and others.

Who can participate?

People of all ages and backgrounds take part — from teens to older adults, men and women, healthy volunteers, and those living with mental health conditions. Each study has rules about who can join. If one study isn't right for you, another may be a better fit.

Is clinical research safe?

Your safety is the top priority. Every study must be approved by the **Institutional Review Board (IRB)**, a team of doctors, experts, and community members who make sure the study is safe and fair. Most studies are also subject to federal regulation.

Should you participate?

Before joining a mental health study, think about the potential benefits and risks:

Benefits

- Access to new treatments before they are widely available
- Extra medical attention at low or no cost
- Helping others by contributing to research
- You can leave the study at any time

Risks

- The treatment may not work as expected
- Studies can take time and energy
- Some costs may not be covered by insurance
- You may not get the study results
- You could be removed from the study for safety or other reasons

What is informed consent?

Before you join a clinical research study, you go through the **informed consent process**. This is how you learn all the important details about the study so you can make an informed choice.

Researchers will explain the study to you and give you a document that covers:

- The study's purpose and length
- What will happen during the study (procedures and tests)
- Known risks and possible benefits
- Who to contact with questions

Signing the informed consent form does **not** commit you. You can ask questions at any time and leave the study at any time, for any reason.

For more mental health educational resources, visit depressioncenter.org/toolkit.

This document provides general educational information developed by the Eisenberg Family Depression Center. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Please consult your health care provider if you have questions about your health or treatment options.