Participating in Research Studies at Stanford

Research studies play an important role in helping to prevent, diagnose, and treat disease. There are different types of studies that all share a common purpose: to help people live healthier lives. These studies are made possible by volunteers like you. By participating in a research study at Stanford, whether for a specific disease or as a healthy participant, you are contributing to advancing health.

Deciding to participate in a research study is a personal choice. If you would like to opt out of receiving invitations to participate from the Research Participation Program, contact us at 650-497-3612 or send an email to joinresearch@stanford.edu.

Frequently Asked Questions

The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are designed to help you learn more about participating in research studies at Stanford.

1. **What are research studies?**

   Health providers and scientists use research studies to answer questions about health. Research can find better ways to prevent, diagnose, and treat diseases and conditions.

   There are many kinds of research studies. Some test new medicines or devices. Other studies use interviews or surveys to learn about health problems or patient experiences.

2. **Why do people participate in research studies?**

   Every study is different and the reasons people participate are different. Some reasons people participate in research studies are:
   - To help others
   - To help advance science
   - To possibly improve their own health
• To access treatment options that might not be available outside of the research

3. I received a message about participating in a research study. Why did I receive this?

Researchers use different methods to reach people who may be eligible to participate in a research study. They might advertise a study using posted flyers or a newspaper or radio ad.

Another method is to contact people who have received medical care at Stanford. The Stanford Research Participation Program works with study teams to facilitate this outreach. Research studies are suggested to patients based on a computer-aided search, and an invite is sent by the Research Participation Program on behalf of the study team. Only when you express interest in a study is your contact information provided to the study team.

4. I don't remember giving Stanford permission to contact me for research studies. Did I?

All Stanford patients sign the ‘Stanford Notice of Privacy Practices’ form. This form covers different terms of agreement, one of which is that you may be contacted about participating in research. One of the benefits of receiving care at an academic medical center is having access to the latest research studies and clinical trials.

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5. Do I need to participate in a study I am invited to?

No, you are under no obligation to join a research study, and your decision will not affect your medical care at Stanford. Participating in a research study is always completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate in a research study, you can always change your mind at any time.
6. Can a researcher, with the Research Participation Program, look at my medical record in order to invite me to participate in a research study?

A researcher who has received approval from the Stanford Institutional Review Board (the office responsible for protecting the rights of people participating in research studies) may use a computer-aided search to identify groups of patients who may be interested in participating in their study. This search is done with identifying information (known as Protected Health Information, PHI) removed from the records. Researchers do not know which patients have been contacted about study participation.

This service and process is in place to ensure the privacy of Stanford patients, while increasing access to research opportunities.

7. Can only people with a disease or specific medical problem participate in research studies?

Many types of people are needed to participate in research studies. Some research studies need individuals with specific health problems. Other research studies need healthy individuals. People of all ages and ethnic backgrounds are needed. Every research study has its own rules about who is eligible to participate, which will help determine if you are able to participate. The study doctor or research team works with people interested in research to see if they are a fit for a research study.

8. Will my personal health information be protected if I participate in a research study?

Yes. It is the legal and ethical responsibility of all Stanford faculty, staff, trainees, students, volunteers, and contractors to protect and preserve personal and confidential patient information. This includes information collected and used for research purposes.

9. What laws does Stanford comply with when conducting research studies?

Stanford researchers comply with federal regulations, state laws, University polices, and national and international standards for research involving human participants. Before a study can begin, the Stanford Institutional
Review Board must approve it. In addition, all Stanford personnel working on a research study are trained in how to protect the rights of research participants.

10. Where can I find out about other research studies being conducted at Stanford?

Stanford is a world-renowned academic research institution that conducts many different types of research studies. Clinical studies test the safety and effectiveness of drugs or devices, or investigate the efficacy of different treatments or interventions. At any time, there are hundreds of studies at Stanford that are looking for research participants. Explore Stanford Clinical Trials.

About the Stanford Research Participation Program

Stanford’s Research Participation Program provides resources and tools to help research teams meet their participant engagement and retention goals, with a focus on engaging participants as partners in research. Support for the Research Participation Program is provided by the National Institutes of Health’s Clinical & Translational Science Award (grant #UL1TR003142).

Questions?
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