

Recently Diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease? You Can Help Speed a Cure.

What Is Clinical Research?

Clinical research is medical research that involves ordinary people — people with various medical diagnoses, and healthy people too — who volunteer to participate in carefully planned investigations. Clinical studies are essential to developing ways to diagnose, treat, and possibly predict Parkinson's disease (PD). They also provide insight about the underlying processes of disease and how new therapies might target them. When it comes to testing drugs, clinical trials provide the gold standard of proof that new treatments are safe and effective.

Why Should I Participate in a Clinical Trial or Study Now?

As a person recently diagnosed with Parkinson's, you are in a unique position to help researchers develop therapies to slow or stop PD progression. Many studies testing therapies to change the course of PD need people who have not yet begun treatment. Without the interference of other Parkinson's medications, researchers can better determine if these therapies are effective. In other types of studies, volunteers who are recently diagnosed can help researchers understand the underlying mechanisms of PD and how it naturally changes over time.

A PD diagnosis can be overwhelming. You may feel that you have enough to manage without getting involved in research. However, many people find that learning more about Parkinson's and participating in clinical research empowers them to take charge of their health.

What Types of Clinical Trials or Studies Are Available?

Perhaps the greatest unmet need, for everyone with Parkinson's, is a therapy that would slow or stop disease progression — what researchers call a disease-modifying therapy. Volunteering for a clinical trial that investigates this type of experimental therapy is one way to participate in clinical research. Other opportunities for involvement could include studies using brain imaging scans to look for changes that could diagnose and track disease (i.e., biomarkers), online questionnaires about your symptoms to see how your disease progresses over time, or one-time surveys to determine if you've been exposed to certain risk factors.

How Can I Find Clinical Trials and Studies to Help Advance Parkinson's Research?

Register for Fox Trial Finder, The Michael J. Fox Foundation's online clinical trial matching tool, at www.foxtrialfinder.org.

